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THE REAL TRUDEAU

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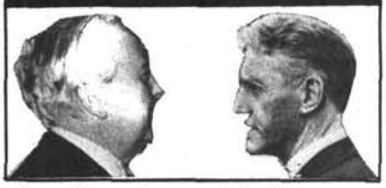
Oilgate's Price



IT IS NOW PLAIN that our political elite do not intend to have any thorough and searching inquiry into the Rhodesian sanctions scandal. As the NEW STATESMAN predicted, there has been a steady increase in the confidence with which the case against real inquiry has been murmured forth. We are advised to look to the future, and to avoid wasting our energy with inquiry into academic and historical questions.

It is important to be clear about the consequences which follow if we allow our masters to wriggle free from the Rhodesian hook. It will mean that we allow oil companies – and, in principle, large corporations of any kind – to decide, in combination with their Whitehall allies, the parameters of national policy. If that is allowed, then the damage to Britain's relations with Black Africa will be almost the least of the price to be paid.

There is one especially harmful piece of sleight-of-hand in the argument that the worldly-wisemen put about oil sanctions. Labour's error, as they state it, lay in having adopted a sanctions policy in the first place. That was never more than a piece of hot-headed, impractical radicalism: later, sensible men operating in secret had to adjust British policy to the realities of the world. It is a pity they had to tell lies in the process, but the fault lay not in them.

The truth is that no-one has yet shown that oil sanctions against Rhodesia were impractical. We are told, owlishly, that it would never have been possible to stop the Rhodesians getting hold, somehow, of some sort of oil.

But some sort of oil, somehow, would not have been enough to keep Smith's supporters in the style to which they have always become accustomed. What they required was a steady flow of many complex oil products, tailored to meet the diverse needs of their industries, delivered with no unusual effort on their part, and paid for at roughly the normal price. And that is what they got. Had things been otherwise, the costs of their economy would have risen sharply, and very likely to levels that would have been intolerable to a patriotism based largely on the illusion of prosperity. In other words, the aims of a sanctions policy would not have been to deny all oil to the Rhodesians, but to deny them a cheap, efficient and abundant oil supply. It is, of course, possible that such a policy could not have been carried out – even if the Government had been resolute, the civil service honest and efficient, and the oil companies had been prepared to show some degree of respect for the law. But prima facie, it seems that the policy failed because the government fed on fantasies, because the civil service conspired to support those fantasies with outrageous political deceptions, and because the oil companies regarded the law as something to be broken at their convenience.

It is a basic device of conservative rhetoric to suggest that there is no choice except one between apocalypse and adherence to the status quo. Thus, nothing can or ever could have been done about Rhodesia by way of sanctions, short of some mighty economic paroxysm which the British people could neither tolerate nor afford. Now, this may be the truth of the matter, in which case, so much the worse for us. But we do not have any worthwhile evidence to support the proposition: all we have is evidence that a sanctions policy will not work when the government chiefly responsible for implementing it – in this case, our own – is working actively to subvert it. That much, any sensible schoolchild could have told us.

What we now need to know – and it is the real purpose of any inquiry – is whether anything better might have been possible had we equipped ourselves with better institutions and better servants. It is quite clear that many of the critical decisions in our Rhodesian policy were taken by people who acted like fools or rogues, and at the moment we scarcely know where foolery ended or roguery began. If we allow ourselves to be persuaded that such distinctions are ones of merely historical interest, we shall of course deserve the fate of those who decline to understand history: notoriously, the condemnation of having to endure it repeating itself.

NOTES

A jury in Wales without Dai Jones

Duncan Campbell writes: Further curiosities about the manner in which juries are selected have been highlighted by the recent conspiracy case involving two members of the Welsh Language Society. An improbably large number of English surnames appeared at all stages of jury selection.

Carmarthen is in the centre of a strongly Welsh area. Yet none of the first twelve jurors called to serve in the case bore a Welsh surname: Andrews, Carlisle, Pringle, Hanson, Allen, Hinner, Birdwood, Adams, John, Day, Kirkwood and Brooks. The southwest Wales telephone directory shows that at least 60 per cent of the population bear distinctive names like Jones, Evans or Davies. Figures for the districts from which the Carmarthen jury came range from 70 to 84 per cent Welsh names. The odds against such a selection in a *random* sample of the population are about three thousand to one.

Juries are chosen in a way which few social scientists would recognise as 'random'. The electoral register for the appropriate district is scrutinised by county court officials who may select any names they wish, omitting only on grounds of age. They are told to choose the names 'at random' but given no guidance as to methods for doing this properly. In these circumstances some degree of imbalance is inevitable. A summoning officer may or may not get an even balance between men and women, or between young and old, but is unlikely to get all factors fairly represented. Sometimes a deliberate bias of a harmless sort is evident: in a recent case the entire jury was distinguished by odd surnames like Smelly and Nut.

The bias in the Carmarthen case was less innocuous, as the subject was a quasi-political trial centring on the Welsh language. A previous trial – with an almost totally Welsh and Welsh-speaking jury – had resulted in no verdict and this was the retrial. Forty jurors were summoned in the 'panel' for the new trial: of these, only 40 per cent had Welsh surnames. The odds against such a low percentage being selected purely at random are about ten thousand to one.

After ten members of the panel were excused, some thirty jurors, ten of them with Welsh surnames, appeared at court. They were called into court individually – again supposedly at random. Even with the highly biased sample, the odds against no Welsh surnames in the first twelve was over one thousand to one.

The Wales and Chester Circuit office in Cardiff denies issuing any 'special directions' to jury summoning officers on this occasion, although they acknowledge that their selection procedures are 'not scientific'. They did assure the defence lawyers that the jury would not be vetted but this seems to have meant only that there would be no central vetting. As the jury was called in, a Special Branch detective from Carmarthen advised the prosecution on the suitability of each juror. Two were rejected. After challenges from the defence, the final twelve did include a minority of Welsh and Welsh speakers. But all but two had to use simultaneous translation facilities to understand the proceedings which were conducted in Welsh.

It is certainly remarkable, in a case of considerable political sensitivity, to find jury selection in the hands of people who would be millionaires if they applied their powers of overcoming lengthy odds to the turf.

Times workers wait for the crunch

Patrick Wintour writes: Developments in the next two or three weeks will determine whether Times Newspapers will be suspended from publication for a very long time. It is generally agreed that if one side does not concede something very important soon, there will be a stalemate for several months. The management's two concessions so far (the fortnight's delay of dismissal notices and the withdrawal of tough financial penalty clauses in the disputes procedure) were largely expected and have merely prolonged the phoney war. There are still far too many individual chapel negotiations to be completed than is possible in a fortnight. The only chance of a major turn-around would seem to be either the National Graphical Association or the management altering its position on the principle of editorial input being keyed-in directly by non-NGA members. If the management were to insist on

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direct non-NGA input only on the classified side, the NGA might start talking seriously again and other things might fall into place.

What seems more likely is that no agreement will have been reached within a month; dismissal notices will then begin to expire and an increasing number of people will be thrown out of their jobs. The company does not intend to make redundancy payments to those who have refused to sign new contracts. Natsopa, whose members tend to be on shorter periods of notice, hopes to find jobs for them elsewhere, but picketing will nevertheless commence and tempers start to fray. The management will face the problems of unheated buildings, no switchboard operators, and the loss of its cashiers and payroll department. And what managers can function without secretaries or staff to administer expense accounts?

In the run-up to the suspension, Natsopa was particularly frustrated by the slow speed at which negotiations proceeded. The delay was caused, claims the union, by management's representatives having no real authority to negotiate: they had to refer back possible concessions for higher authority, and when they did so this was usually not forthcoming. As the deadline approached, Natsopa tried to speed things up by bringing in their national Assistant Secretary John Moakes, on agreement that the management would wheel on Dugal Nisbet-Smith, General Manager of Times Newspapers. It was hoped that if they reached agreement by Thursday morning of last week, Natsopa members would not be dismissed.

When the first meeting took place on the Monday last week, Mr Nisbet-Smith said he had to see the Board instead; and when the second one was held on the Wednesday, he announced that he was not prepared to attend. This certainly suggests that management was set on closure, hoping to isolate the NGA from the other unions. So far, there has been little sign of that happening. The decision of *The Times* NUJ chapel to reject the management's offer indicates instead that it is the managers themselves – including William Rees-Mogg – who are isolated.

Henry Kissinger rewrites history

Godfrey Hodgson writes: The rehabilitation of Richard Nixon is now under way, so it is not surprising that Henry Kissinger is emboldened to make his own contribution to the rewriting of history. In a long interview with Arnaud de Borchgrave in the current *Newsweek*, he launches an unsubtle but silkily timed attack on President Carter's foreign policy – just when it is running into trouble in Africa, the Middle East and over SALT.

When de Borchgrave asks Kissinger for his reaction to a recent statement by Carter that US prestige was low when he took over the presidency 'because of Vietnam, Watergate and CIA wrongdoing', the unrepentant Kissinger replies: 'It makes bipartisan support very difficult . . . Many foreigners raised questions over Vietnam because we lost, over Watergate because it was inexplicable to them how a country could tear apart its executive authority, and over CIA investigations not because of what was discovered, but because of the dismantling of an institution for no purpose whatsoever.'

If this is a sample of the considered reflections of Kissinger the historian on what even John Mitchell called 'the White House horrors', or on his own catastrophic intervention in Cambodia, for example, there can be no telling what we shall be asked to believe in his long-awaited multi-million dollar memoirs. But the *Newsweek* interview is also the work of an aspiring politician:

> *Arnaud de Borchgrave*: If Senator Jacob Javits retires from the Senate, will you enter the race?
> *Kissinger*: I expect Javits to run in 1980.
> *de Borchgrave*: And if he doesn't?
> *Kissinger*: I don't want to answer that.

It has been an open secret for months that Kissinger is off and running like a rabbit for that Senate seat. And just in case he doesn't get it, he is bidding for his rightful position as the principal foreign affairs spokesman of the Republican Party. This means – given the competition from some of those already speaking up against Carter and SALT and human rights – that Kissinger must stake out his position clearly on the Right. This he unashamedly does.

On Iran, he says, there are three areas of US responsibility: '(1) The geopolitical decline since Vietnam has demoralized friends and emboldened enemies; (2) the human-rights campaign, as now conducted, is a weapon aimed primarily at allies and tends to undermine their domestic structures; – what an implicit admission! – (3) the assault on the CIA has deprived us of crucial information and vital tools.'

On South Africa: 'A policy of confrontation is tantamount to fomenting race war.' On Rhodesia: 'We must prevent another African problem being solved by Cuban troops and Soviet guns or we will lose all capacity to affect events.' Finally on détente: 'Détentes must not lull us into complacency, slackened defence efforts and unwillingness to consider geopolitical consequences.'

This is the classic language of the American Right. Kissinger knows which side his political bread is buttered.

Legal donkey eats the whole carrot

A correspondent writes: Last month the Court of Appeal decided that a Mrs Poulsum was indeed the owner of the bungalow which she had bought. However, the effect of the litigation is that, if the bungalow is sold, the bulk of the income from the sale will have to be paid to the Law Society to cover Mrs Poulsum's legal costs. How does it come about that property which is declared by the courts to belong to a person is nevertheless used to pay the expense of proving that to be so?

Mrs Poulsum wished to buy a rough-cast bungalow in Canvey Island costing £2,650. As a single lady in her fifties on a small income she was unable to obtain a mortgage from a building society or the local authority. She had living with her in her former home – a council flat – a Mr Wheeler. It was decided to purchase the bungalow in Mr Wheeler's name and he obtained a local authority mortgage for £2,200. Mrs Poulsum paid the deposit, the legal fees and the mortgage instalments. The two lived in the bungalow for three years (although not as husband and wife) until Mr Wheeler left to marry someone else. Mrs Poulsum could not sell the bungalow as long as it remained in Mr Wheeler's name and he claimed an interest in it. They went to court over the matter and each obtained a legal aid certificate to assist them in the litigation.

Under the civil legal aid system, the applicant's means and assets are evaluated according to certain rules: if they are below a specified value the applicant makes no contribution to his or her own costs (and this was so in Mrs Poulsum's case). If they are above that value, there is an increasing scale of contribution, until the applicant's means are so great that they come outside the scheme altogether. Legally-aided applicants who are unsuccessful in an action will generally *not* be ordered to pay the costs of the successful party without leave of the court, and the amount does not usually exceed their own contribution to the legal aid fund. Successful applicants are usually entitled to an order for costs against the unsuccessful party. If both sides are legally-aided there may be no order for costs at all.

However, the catch comes in Section 9(6) of the Legal Aid Act of 1974, which provides that there shall be 'a first charge for the benefit of the legal aid fund on any property (wherever situated) which is recovered or preserved' for the legally aided litigant, to the extent of his or her unpaid costs. In disputes about property where the matrimonial home is the only asset, both parties either 'recover'

The tradition is that authors should not question too much utterances of those who review their books. Normally, I adhere to this tradition. But a review of my latest book, *The Tartar Khan's Englishman*, published anonymously in *The Economist*, raises an issue of principle which merits some discussion – that is, the relationship between academics and journalists. It is, one might say, a demarcation dispute: for if the tenor of the *Economist*'s reviewer is anything to go by, his belief is that working journalists should not be allowed to write books on subjects that have been deemed by academics to be their own preserve.

My book is based on a discovery I made in a 13th-century monastic chronicle. It is the story of a mysterious Englishman who became the chief diplomat of Batu Khan and spearheaded the Tartar onslaught on Europe in 1241. It was the find of a lifetime. Yet my anonymous critic in the *Economist* chooses to pat me patronisingly on the head – challenging, it would seem, ab officio, the ability of an investigative journalist to apply the tools of his trade to a historical subject.

'There is a market nowadays for amateur, imaginative history,' he (or she?) begins, 'works where genuine learning and a lot of research are needed, but the passion for concrete results is not hampered by professional caution or the fear of alienating selectors for academic jobs.'

Amateur, imaginative history? I have published a number of books on historical subjects, both medieval and modern; I have studied history under the proper academic circumstances; collected degrees, and could append a selection of letters after my name. But presumably all this does not count. What counts, it would seem, is that I earn my living as a journalist, and as such ought to know my place. Apparently the reviewer considers that I should not poach on the territory of those who have been properly certified by academic selectors as persons properly qualified to look into historical matters.

Only this could explain his failure to criticise on the basis of errors of fact the historical case made out by me. Instead of making a rational critique of the book — a book which sets out to add to the sum total of human knowledge, rather than exploit the safe topics which academics choose in order to avoid alienating their superiors – the reviewer contrives to pat me on the head while kicking me at the same time:

> Mr Ronay has written a splendid biography . . . It is gripping reading; it is not quite impossible; one only hopes that it is true, or nearly so . . .

One cannot help wondering whether academics with such scant respect for the intelligence of their readers should be allowed to poach on the pages of journals best preserved for working journalists.

Gabriel Ronay

Gabriel Ronay studied history and philology for five years at Budapest, and had just completed the defence of his thesis when the 1956 revolution broke out. He came to the West, and continued his studies at Edinburgh, receiving an MA (Honours). His books include *Romanian Foreign Policy Since the Second World War* and *The Dracula Myth*. He has written on East European affairs for *The Times*, the *Sunday Times* and the NEW STATESMAN (under the name Gabriel Lorince).

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or 'preserve' their share in the house. It is reminiscent of Aesop's fable of two rabbits who asked a donkey to divide a carrot for them: as the parts were unequal, the donkey was invited to bite off first one part and then the other in order to achieve a fair division. The donkey ate the whole carrot.

The practical effect of the rule is clearly shown in the 1974 case of *Cooke v. Head (No. 2)*: in a dispute between a man and a woman over a house, the man was awarded two-thirds and the woman one third. Out of the total value of £2,546, the woman received about £704, the man about £98. The balance went in costs to the legal aid fund. Lord Denning sagely noted: 'This shows that when the sole asset is the proceeds of a house, it is much better for the disputing parties to settle at the outset: because, if they go to law, much of those proceeds will be eaten up in cost, even though both parties are legally aided with a nil contribution.'

The Court of Appeal expressed great sympathy with Mrs Poulsum. Mr Wheeler was ordered to pay £100 out of his own pocket and the court declared that they hoped the legal aid fund would ameliorate Mrs Poulsum's position. This is small comfort to a person who, in order to establish that her home belongs to her, has that home saddled with a debt which may well exceed the value of the equity.

Troops assemble for battle over devolution

Brian Wilson writes: The past week has seen a flurry of organisation-forming in preparation for the March referendum on the proposed Scottish Assembly. Three groups are now working for a 'yes' vote, with two on the other side of the argument. It is doubtful if this level of organisational activity is matched by public interest, though opinion polls continue to suggest considerable support for the Assembly. The Scottish Council of the Labour Party will not campaign officially through umbrella organisations but is running its own show in conjunction with the Scottish TUC and with £50,000 from Transport House.

The most active group to date has been the 'Yes for Scotland' campaign, dominated by the Scottish Nationalists and Jim Sillars of the Scottish Labour Party. Since the main idea behind the Assembly ploy was to deliver the death blow to the SNP, their active propagation of the cause has begun to worry devolution supporters in other parties. As a result, a third grouping has appeared – 'Alliance for an Assembly', featuring the Liberals' Scottish leader, Russell Johnstone, dissident Tory Alick Buchanan-Smith and Labour MP Donald Dewar.

The 'Scotland Says No' campaign was launched in the salubrious setting of Glasgow's Albany Hotel. It will inevitably be identified with the Tories and money from Scottish industry, but there is also a sprinkling of public figures from other parties. The 'Labour Vote No' group, with which the names of MPs Tam Dalyell and Robin Cook are associated, stresses its independence from the more prosperous 'anti' organisation. But both groups believe that the SNP has got it right and that the Assembly would indeed prove to be a stepping stone to full independence, with political debate bogged down for the forseeable future in wrangles over the Assembly's limited powers.

Landlord blocks rent and buy housing scheme

A Correspondent writes: An original housing scheme, designed to allow tenants partly to purchase and partly to rent their flats, is in danger because landlords are refusing to negotiate for the sale of the block in question. Antrim Mansions, in Haverstock Hill, North London is one of many blocks which made up the empire of the super-bankrupt William Stern: just before the collapse of Stern and his allies in First National Finance Corporation, they contracted to sell the block to the Gerson group, whose founder Gerson Berger died last year.

Many of the better-quality blocks from bankrupt property groups have been bought, in one scheme or another, by their tenants. But complications have tended to arise in reconciling the financial resources of different kinds of tenants. There are some who have no trouble raising money to buy their flats: for them, no public subsidy is available. At the other end of the spectrum are those who cannot afford to buy – or do not wish to – and want to go on renting. Housing associations are subsidised by the Housing Corporation so that blocks of flats can be bought for rental.

But in between, there are people who cannot afford to buy a full interest in their flats, but who could afford, and would like to have, a part-interest. The originality of the Antrim scheme is that it offers a new way to cover the whole spectrum of tenants, by offering an 'equity participation' lease, so that a tenant can buy a part-share in the flats, while paying some rent at the same time.

The scheme was devised by the Community Housing Association, brought in to advise the tenants after their request for a compulsory purchase order was turned down by the Department of the Environment. It allows tenants to buy interests ranging between 10 per cent and 60 per cent, with rents varying accordingly between £492 and £135 per year – made possible because housing associations are exempted from the law which prevents private landlords from combining premium and rental payments. However, tenants who want to sell must first offer them back to the Association, and this provision makes the scheme eligible for public subsidy.

Notable difficulties occurred with the building societies: only the Halifax would look at the scheme in detail and decided that it was not acceptable as security for a mortgage. Finally, the tiny New Cross Building Society agreed to make some funds available. Obviously, the scheme can be criticised on political grounds, in that public money is going to people who already have some resources of their own. But from the Housing Corporation's viewpoint, the scheme adds another element of choice and sophistication to the structure of co-ownership which have been growing up to fill the gap left by bankrupt private landlords – and so the Corporation has remained a faithful backer. The difficulty now is that Gerson's, having turned down an offer of £550,000 from the tenants, decline to nominate a price that would be acceptable. The devisor of the scheme, David Carr, fears that with the property market picking up, the acquisitive instincts of the landlords are reviving strongly.

THE CITY
Christopher Hird

What will emerge from the Wilson Committee's labours?

A fat, slow-moving mouse

This week the TUC submitted the second part of its evidence to the Wilson Committee investigating the City; this just about marks the end of the information gathering phase of the committee's work and after Christmas it will start work on its final report and recommendations. As things stand at the moment, it looks as though the report will be a mouse; a big, fat, well-fed, stuffed-with-statistics mouse, but a mouse nonetheless. With one or two exceptions – small companies' problems being a notable example – the Committee looks well set to produce a report which shies away from any radical or major recommendation. Already the chairman Sir Harold Wilson has said that if the Committee causes a public debate, it will have been worthwhile. And in its evidence this week the TUC said:

> The publication of written evidence by contributors and of oral evidence by the Committee itself has added substantially to the body of public knowledge about financial institutions. Thus whatever the outcome of the Wilson Committee's final report the Wilson Committee has already performed a useful function.

There is evidence that the Committee has acted as a catalyst for some internal change in financial institutions. It has certainly also highlighted some important aspects of the financial system – such as the significant and growing power of the pension funds. It is thought that Sir Harold would not be too unhappy if his Committee turned out to be a good publishing house. But all of this is far short of what many had hoped for.

The history of the Wilson Committee from when it was announced in September 1976 tends to support the view that government investigations and royal commissions are set up not so much to do things, as to ensure that things are not done. There was no shortage of reasons for disquiet about the City of London two years ago: the Bank of England was still picking up the pieces of the property collapse; there had been a series of Department of Trade reports, such as those on collapsed fringe bankers London & County Securities and trading conglomerate Lonrho; there had been a highly critical accountant's report on the way Slater Walker ran its affairs and the Stock Exchange was investigating the share dealings of businessman Sir Hugh Fraser. Into this troubled pot the Labour Party cast its proposals for the nationalisation of the banking and insurance industry. Callaghan could see this was a proposal which might appeal to political activists but could turn out as a electoral albatross, so at the 1976 conference, as part of the Social Contract, he revealed that he was setting up a committee to look into the City and therefore could not accept the motion on the nationalisation of the banks.

The chairmanship of the Committee was not announced until well after the Labour Party Conference and many in the City thought Sir Harold Wilson a most unsuitable person to be put in charge. However it has become increasingly clear that they had little to fear. One of the major problems of the Committee has been its very wide terms of reference:

> To enquire into the role and functioning, at home and abroad, of financial institutions in the United Kingdom and their value to the economy; to review in particular the provision of funds for industry and trade; to consider what changes are required on the existing arrangements for the supervision of these institutions, including the possible extension of the public sector, and to make recommendations.

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The very breadth of these terms of reference has given the Committee something of a shapeless task. Sir Harold has said he sees his committee as a successor to the Radcliffe Committee – which in the Fifties looked at the operation of the monetary system.

But Wilson's terms of reference embrace both this rather academic study and the idea of a more political look at how the financial institutions are serving the community. It is clear that there has been an underlying disagreement between members of the Committee on what sort of enquiry they were meant to be carrying out. The problem has been made more acute by the presence of obvious trade union and private industry blocks on a very large committee of 18 – though committee members have, apparently, made great attemps to avoid, what one committee member has described as, 'beating their tribal drums'. However, the difference of approach has often come out in the cross-examination of witnesses. For instance, when the Stock Exchange gave evidence, committee member Professor Andrew Bain showed great interest in the size of the discount offered to shareholders in a rights issue whilst the one trade union committee member present at this session made a comparatively small, though pungent, contribution to the discussion.

That this difference of approach has not come into the open more is partly due to Sir Harold's strict instruction that only he was to talk about the work of the Committee and partly due to the decision to spend a long time gathering the facts on which the final report will be based. This process has also been lengthened by the slowness of some of the institutions in making their submissions. Virtually every City institution has taken the Wilson Committee extremely seriously (the big clearing banks had a whole team working on their evidence). This often meant that getting approval for evidence was a lengthy bureaucratic procedure.

Much of that evidence appears to have been predictable in the extreme: the National Association of Pension Funds thought there was no shortage of money for investment; the Stock Exchange thought high taxes were killing off the private investor; the Bank of England thought its lifeboat operation to save the fringe banks had been wholly successful. And so on. However some committee members reckon to have found something of interest in everyone's evidence and some of the unpublished evidence is also thought to have carried some weight with the Committee.

But just dealing with the quantity of evidence has been a problem and in the early summer the Committee split up into small working parties to examine five particular areas of study: small firms, overseas direct investment and exchange control; pensions funds and pension funding; institutions and company management and, finally, banks. The job of each working party was to assemble all the information on their topic and supplement this with any other facts they thought necessary; decide what the issues were and set out the arguments, without any firm recommendations. All this has now been done and the working parties are drafting conclusions in the light of the discussion which have been held by the complete Committee – which at the moment is meeting weekly. The report on small firms will be published within the next few weeks, as Harold Lever has said he is waiting for this before he makes any more proposals on what can be done to help small firms. No other interim reports will, however, be published and after a lengthy discussion the Committee have decided against publishing some preliminary conclusions.

As a result of this approach, major controversy has been avoided. There seems to be little enthusiasm among committee members for extending public ownership within the City and the only significant issue on which there promises to be some serious disagreement is the direction of investment funds. But it is interesting that even the TUC evidence is not proposing major root and branch reform. It is not for the nationalisation of the banks, but it is for merging the National Savings Bank with the national Giro, to create a State bank which 'should not enjoy any artificial advantages'; it is for the current semi-independent status of the Bank of England, though it wants a representative Policy Board to oversee it; The TUC stresses that there is 'a wide range of middle ground' between state direction of funds and 'pure market determination'.

The scene is therefore set for the Wilson Committee to produce a massive and weighty tome, full of facts, both outlining the problems, presenting the arguments for both sides and ending with some rather bland conclusions. To some extent this is the result of the Committee's composition, the size of its task and its method of operation. But it is also possible that in busying itself with the detailed mechanics of the City, the Wilson Committee has managed to miss some of the more fundamental problems. A major theme behind the setting up of the Committee and its line of enquiry has been that there is plenty of money sloshing about but financiers would not let industry have it and, when they did, it was only on the promise of quick returns, which were more readily available in the property market. The Wilson Committee *has* turned up some obvious institutional failings within the City, but in many respects these are details. Is it really the case that the failings of modern British capitalism are the result of institutional problems in financial markets?

EDUCATION

Rick Rogers

THE DEPARTMENT of Education and Science has recently been encouraging local authorities to be more open with parents about what's going on in schools. But it finds great difficulty in following its own advice.

Since 1945 the DES has been kept busy approving thousands of LEA proposals to close schools. Over 800 rural primary schools have gone in the last ten years. Only since January 1977 has the DES been maintaining some kind of record of the closures – approved and rejected.

Now under section 13 of the 1944 Education Act, local authorities must submit any proposal to close a school for approval by the Secretary of State. Such proposals are dealt with by a different team of assessors according to which part of the country the school is in. Only then does the recommendation pass on to Mrs Williams. The DES insists that, because several teams are involved, it is almost impossible to keep detailed records. A convenient, but thin, bureaucratic excuse – the teams are based at the Department.

Nor are any reasons given for approving or rejecting a closure proposal; this in spite of the fact that the DES itself has published general guidelines by which it will assess the merits of proposals.

Two further excuses are made for not documenting this information in any detail. No-one has asked for it before, and while such information might be useful to us (i.e. the consumer) it is not central to the concerns of the Department.

All this is hard to square with the recently issued circulars which tighten up the rules which LEAs must follow in submitting closure proposals to the DES and in explaining and publicising them locally, and which encourage LEAs to give parents as much information as possible about local schools – now legitimised further in the Education Bill which had its second reading this week.

NOW the closure of schools has been a matter of public concern for as long as the DES has been approving closures – but only ostensibly on a local basis, as communities have fought in isolation to keep a school open. It is fast becoming a national issue.

The cause is the dramatic fall in the number of pupils coming into school, which has been happening in primary school for some time and is just beginning in secondary schools. The consequences of this can benefit the education system – improved pupil/teacher ratios, greater resources, an opportunity to be more flexible with educational plant to help hitherto neglected areas of schooling and child care. Some of those benefits may have to be bought at the expense of closing schools. That's where the problems start.

Closures have already substantially altered the pattern of educational provision in some areas – often without the proper involvement of parents and local communities. Because the level of public consultation over school closures has been so pitifully low, a delicate (but straightforward) issue is being turned into one as protracted and polarised as the struggle to establish comprehensive education in the Sixties. Many parents come out of a school closure battle convinced that the people last in the queue for consideration were the children. Sometimes they are right.

The solution is also straightforward – more public information about why some schools are accepted for closure and others are not; about how to identify and cope with the problems of falling rolls; about how to extract the benefits; about how to balance accepting a loss to win a gain, say, a longer and more difficult journey to a school with the promise of a slightly better learning environment.

A greater openness at the centre would encourage most local authorities to do the same – and actually to take notice of those 'advisory' circulars. Of course, more information would also mean a greater accountability, and would reduce the hypocrisy that is the pledge of more open government. On those two counts, little is likely to be done willingly.

In the meantime, the story so far (according to the DES): During 1977, the Secretary of State approved the closure of 87 primary schools and 16 secondary schools; she rejected proposals to close three primary schools.

At the end of October this year, 58 primary schools had been approved for closure (41 rural, 17 urban) and 10 secondary schools (all urban). A 'one-off exercise' carried out on 10 November revealed that 34 closure proposals were currently being considered – 28 primary (15 rural, 13 urban) and six secondary (one rural, five urban).

So the rate of closures remains high – and it could be accelerating. The National Association for the Support of Small Schools claims that at least 300 closure proposals are now in the pipeline for submission to the DES. Whatever the number, the lesson is clear. Watch your local school. It may not be there much longer if you don't.

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ENVIRONMENT
John Wardroper

Why there is no market for Rolls-Royce's quiet lorry

The orphan juggernaut

A REMARKABLE machine that could make life pleasanter for millions of people has been perfected in Britain: a top-weight lorry as quiet as a family car. If factory retooling were the only problem, it could be coming off the assembly-line within three years. But a technical breakthrough is not enough when it is in the custody of the Department of Transport. If the department's present methods prevail, the wait could last ten years.

'But that is unfair,' the department will say. 'Vehicle noise reductions are governed by EEC decisions in Brussels.' Yes and no. Our Dutch and German partners have bolder ideas, of which more in a moment.

Boldness seldom rules in Whitehall; seldom, at any rate, when the Transport Department's concern for the public comes up against the solicitations of vehicle makers and operators. Consider the record. Fifteen years ago an independent committee headed by Sir Alan Wilson recommended that the maximum permitted lorry noise level should be speedily reduced, as a moderate first step, to 85 decibels – which the manufacturers themselves conceded could be done at little cost.

No such thing happened. The limit stands at 91 (a 10-decibel rise doubles the annoyance). And in those 15 years the number of top-weight lorries, the worst noisemakers, has gone up enormously, with the warm encouragement of the department. More than 20 million Britons now live in roads where the noise is officially 'unacceptable', and millions more shop and work in such roads.

One way of soothing the public is to order some research. As everybody knew how to bring lorries down to 85 decibels (chiefly with panels round the engine), the department announced in 1971 a £750,000 programme to create something much quieter. The result has at last been unveiled, rather quietly: a joint product of Rolls-Royce's Shrewsbury diesel plant and the Foden lorry firm in Cheshire. Thanks to a redesigned engine, cooling system, gearbox and silencer, plus glassfibre panelling, it records 81 decibels. And this is a 320hp giant, powerful enough (surprisingly) for a juggernaut eight tons heavier than the 32-tonner now permitted in Britain. Something smaller could easily come below 80 decibels.

But neither Rolls/Foden nor any other manufacturer will put this technology into production until they are compelled to, because it would add a small percentage to a lorry's cost and reduce its payload by a few hundred pounds. Road haulage is a cut-throat business where every £ and pound counts.

WHAT NEXT? 'It is our intention,' said the department last week, 'to go to Brussels to try to get a reduction for all categories of vehicle by 1985.' Go when? 'We don't know exactly. Fairly soon.' Any hope of getting down to 80 decibels by 1985? That would be 'sanguine'.

On past form, it would be. The EEC's last round of noise-cutting talks began in 1972. The following year, when Britain was new to the EEC, John Peyton did something that no British transport minister has done since: he made public a letter to the EEC describing traffic noise as 'pollution affecting millions of people' and demanding action: 80 decibels by 1980-81. Years passed. Lorry lobbyists made their plaints. Britain compromised. Result: from October 1982, no haulier will be allowed to buy a lorry noisier than – what? Eighty-eight decibels, a figure already being met by many new lorries.

So that mini-achievement (together with some unexciting reductions for smaller vehicles) will have taken ten years. Then what can be hoped from an unaggressive British approach in 1979? Eighty decibels by 1989? And note this, from the department's own Transport and Road Research Laboratory: 'If quiet lorries were to replace noisy lorries at a rate of, say, 10 per cent per year it would be five years before noticeable reductions in noise levels were experienced.' Wait for 1994.

If a fit of conscience overtook the department, though, it still could not ordain that all new lorries on British roads must meet 80 decibels in, say, three years. In EEC eyes, that would be setting up an unlawful barrier to trade. And yet if the department put its mind to the problem, it could devise ways to bring the whispering juggernaut on-stream fairly quickly. Here is where the Dutch and Germans come in.

The Germans plan to break out of the EEC straitjacket by creating an internal market for quiet lorries. The idea is to ban noisy ones from so many urban areas at night that hauliers will have to buy quiet ones; then daytime bans could swell the market. The German lorry-makers are willing, says the head of Bonn's Noise Abatement Office, Dr Ansgar Vogel: they will be 'making money with products that are friendly to the environment'.

THE DUTCH will create a market in a different way. Early next year they are bringing in a noise-abatement law that empowers them to tax vehicles (or other things) according to their noisiness. The tax will be sharp enough to make it profitable to switch to quiet vehicles. The revenue will go to a £300 million programme of soundproofing and other measures along the noisiest roads. This tax scheme follows the 'polluter pays' principle; a parallel is the requirement for factories, for example, to spend money to prevent pollution of the air or rivers.

The head of the Netherlands Noise Abatement Office, Rood van Noort, is ahead of Britain, meanwhile, in asking the EEC to begin talking about reducing its noise limits. He is sending a report to Brussels this month in which Dutch experts argue that a cut to 80 decibels is possible by 1985 or sooner. And that conclusion was reached without knowledge of the British quiet lorry – for the transport department had not bothered to tell people such as van Noort about it.

The department evidently did not trouble to tell Brussels either, though the quiet lorry achievement is hardly something that came up suddenly. 'We weren't informed about it,' says Albert Henssler, an official responsible for vehicle noise in EEC's industrial directorate. He thinks such things are kept quiet 'to avoid too much public pressure'. Now he is considering inviting European lorry-makers to Brussels for 'a kind of hearing' in the hope of speeding the action.

One might have expected Britain to be taking the lead at Brussels, for two reasons: it suffers far more from lorries than other EEC countries (its percentage of road freight traffic is double that of France or Germany); and it has the quiet lorry as a belated fruit from 1971. But the British administrative structure gives such things as noise a low priority.

In Bonn, the Noise Abatement Office comes under the Interior Ministry; in the Netherlands, under Public Health and Environmental Hygiene. They can stand up to their transport departments. Britain has no such office. The general subject of 'lorries and the environment' comes under an under-secretary at Transport, Joseph Peeler. This is the man who recently wrote a departmental minute (which leaked) proposing that the way to get over the 'political obstacles' that have so far prevented the department from introducing 40-ton lorries would be to hold an inquiry designed to hear all the arguments for them and as few as possible against.

The people at Transport inhabit the same 19-storey complex as Environment, with whom they share what they are proud to call 'common citizenship' It is not done for a man at Environment to rock a Transport boat.

THERE IS a little-known, very British, appendage of Environment called the Noise Advisory Council, a body of men from industry, the academic world and elsewhere, whose meetings are sometimes chaired by Denis Howell (our minister for noise – did anybody know?). The council's task is to make recommendations on 'preventing and abating the generation of noise'. Occasionally it ventures to put some questions to William Rodgers, the Transport Secretary. A year ago it asked him what exactly he meant by a promise in his Transport Policy white-paper that when the quiet lorry was ready 'the government will encourage the manufacturers to include much quieter performance as a feature of their future range of models'. When I put the same question last week, the spokesperson said: 'The next step is to go to Brussels.' In other words, the promise meant nothing.

Recently the council suggested to Rodgers a 'special review' of the traffic noise problem. The department's reply to this, it said last week, is, 'We still feel the Wilson committee's conclusions are valid'; which appears to mean that the department believes in an urgent quietening of vehicles during the Sixties.

The Rolls/Foden quiet lorry

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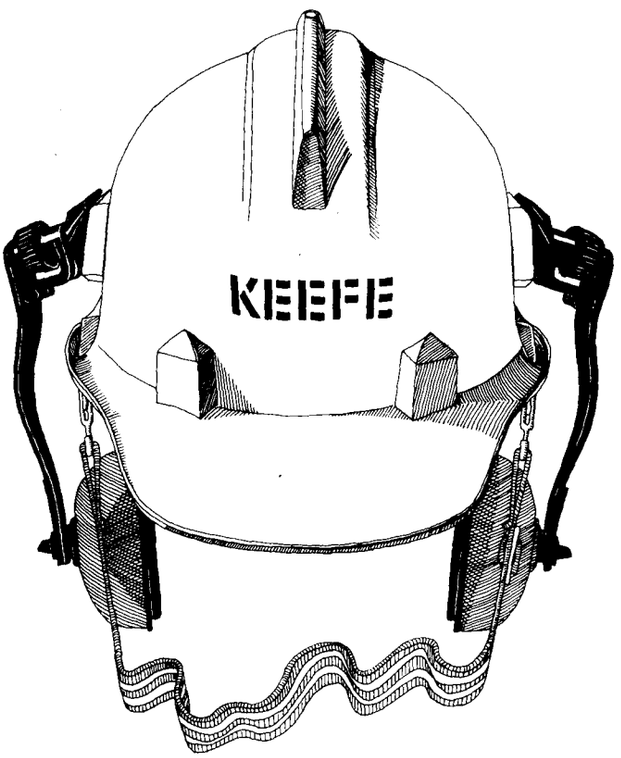

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ITALY
Tana de Zulueta

A cost-benefit analysis of the 'historic compromise'

The regrouping of the PCI

The great unspoken question of the moment in Italy is directed at the Communist Party. It is also the title of a little book just brought out by that veteran of the European Left, the independently minded Communist Altiero Spinelli: *PCI What next?* For more than two years the PCI has been the great, indispensable, yet curiously acquiescent ally of Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti's minority Christian Democrat government. In exchange for their support, however, they got not one single government post – an 'emergency' arrangement which has undeservedly earned the PCI much of the blame for Italy's troubles, from hospital strikes to terrorism and chronic administrative paralysis, yet seems to have left the party's hands tied when it comes to coping with them.

This so far, is the extent of Berlinguer's 'historical compromise' – a grand scheme which was to unite the long-divided catholic and marxist masses and carry the country into a new era of social progress and reforms. But now there are rumours that the PCI is beginning to tuck into its share of the fruits of power, getting its (albeit meagre) quota of jobs in the nationalised banking system and radio and television networks. Last year the Communists were given a directorship in the local credit institution, the Monti dei Paschi di Siena, as a concession to their political supremacy in Tuscany. It is as if the PCI were being inexorably sucked into the immutable power system of the DC. This is exactly what happened to the Socialists in their earlier disastrous Centre-Left coalition with the DC – a curious, peculiarly Italian system of destruction by contamination. And yet, according to Spinelli, the PCI is the Italian party best equipped, thanks to its 'great reserves of political and ethical dynamism', to resist these temptations and actually to lop down the parasitic 'undergrowth' which has invaded everything from the nationalised industries to the welfare system, and on which the Christian Democrat power-base rests.

As a result, however, of the almost obsessive prudence which the PCI has shown during the past two years, not only its sympathisers, but even the rank-and-file have grown impatient. This month the party was given the sort of warning it takes seriously: for the first time in ten years the communist CGIL union at Alfa Romeo lost votes and none of the standing shop-stewards was returned. Though it has never been officially admitted at the leadership level, for the past two years there has been a noticeable change in communist union policy. According to an industrial relations manager in the Italian Confederation of Industrialists, 'of all the union confederations, the one most moderate in its claims these days is the CGIL'. Now, however, union members have evidently had enough of one-sided concessions with no political returns.

This year the party is 20,000 short compared to last year's membership. That isn't enormous, but it is, admits Giorgio Amendola of the PCI secretariat, 'an alarm bell'. At the central committee meeting this week the party leader, Enrico Berlinguer, had to justify his policies to some severe critics within his own party. Party leaders are falling over themselves these days to demonstrate their pluralism by condemning the old 'rituals of unanimity' and the Stalinist interpretation of 'centralised democracy' which was once the rule. They may get more dissent than they bargained for.

Better late than never, the PCI has also rejected wholesale the traditional parcelling out of jobs and public appointments amongst Christian Democrat factions by simply opting out of the political negotiations which precede each appointment. A press release from the PCI headquarters explains that the Communist representatives, 'having been unable to prevent return to the methods of the past' would simply no longer attend the meetings. Because of the political stalemate of the past two years, dozens of appointments are still pending, not only in the banks but also in IRI and ENI, the giant nationalised industrial and energy groups. The PCI communique demands that all the vacancies should immediately be filled by the Prime Minister and the relevant industries, after which parliament will approve them directly. The aim is clearly to strike a first blow at the political 'undergrowth' which is choking the public sector.

To some extent the new attack tactics being used by the PCI are paying off; recently, Andreotti appointed as Minister of Industry a young professor of economics from Bologna, Romano Prodi (an LSE and Harvard graduate), who is not even a party member. By appointing a 'technician', Andreotti is, in his own words, taking a first step towards 'mitigating perpetual single party rule' – something which he will doubtless have enormous difficulties in getting his own party to accept. The Communists were also somewhat mollified by Andreotti's refusal to 'parcel out' another ministry to the faction of the outgoing minister.

As though to anticipate any trouble from within, the Communist leadership seems to be waking up at last from what seemed like a deep sleep. Enrico Berlinguer has declared that matters have come to a crunch. 'The government cannot put off a moment longer the commitments it made to the Communists and Socialists in exchange for their support'. Berlinguer may well be right when he says that the Christain Democrats are stalling because this time they will actually feel the pinch. 'They have become aware that they must make choices which will divide their party and weaken its power structure.' The first of these means approving an agrarian reform which had been put off for more than ten years and which should finally abolish the almost feudal *mezzadria*, or share-cropping system, in order to replace it with a modern lease system better adapted to capital-intensive agriculture. When the Christian Democrats almost scuttled the new law with a volley of amendments, the PCI's response was sharp: 'Governments have fallen for less.'

The recent spate of PCI arm-twisting has been accompanied by a quite uncharacteristic effort to refurbish its image. To do so the Communists have pressed Giorgio Amendola and Pietro Ingrao, two of their most prestigious 'historic leaders', into the limelight. With his appointment as president of the chamber of deputies, Ingrao seemed to have been put in cold storage. As if to prove that the PCI still hasn't quite run out of ideas and charisma, the old partisan has just brought out a new book, *Crisis and the Third Way*, and has been giving interviews all round to explain his ideas.

The 'third way', of course, is a third path to socialism; it may be Utopian. It would be neither the Soviet nor the Western social democratic way. Ingrao also loudly proclaims the existence of 'different marxisms' and the benefits of even more democratic participation. The old Leninist has come a long way when he declares that the besetting sin of both Eastern and Western societies is the alienation of the people.

Amendola goes even further. 'I became a Communist,' he says, 'because I'd read Lenin's *What is to be done?* But if a fresh recruit joined the party today fired with the same ideas, I would say he was mistaken.' Amendola, just recovered from a serious operation, seems to be back in fine fighting form. He has shouted what many people have been thinking for months: 'We pull the cart while the others take pot shots at us, but things can't go on like this any longer.' 'Do you think it's been easy to mobilise the working class in defence of the State as it is? To ask people who have difficulty in making ends meet each month to make sacrifices? . . . It's time the government respected its side of the bargain.' The party's basic policies, however, remain unchanged. 'We have been doing all this because we believe that it is the only way to put the country back on its feet.' The historic compromise in fact remains the only viable formula: 'The Communist Party,' says Amendola, 'believes that Italy is going through a serious crisis, and that in order to resolve it all the parties must join forces.'

In his new book Altiero Spinelli, though far from uncritical in his admiration of the PCI, is another apologist for the now somewhat unfashionable historic compromise. For thirty years, Spinelli believes, Italy has been divided by a sort of internal Cold War, with the Communists and the Christian Democrats divided by utter mutual intolerance. Yet a degree of mutual respect, Rousseau's *Volonté Générale*, is a necessary prerequisite of democracy. 'The Communist historical compromise is above all a proposal for overcoming the breach of consensus which has made our democracy so politically fragile.'

Who knows, though, whether with their followers split or impatiently pulling in opposite directions, its remaining champions can make the compromise last another winter?

NEXT WEEK

Soviet Anti-semitism

A major article by Reuben Ainsztein charts the movement of the Soviet Union towards official, institutionalised anti-semitism.

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PROFILE

Pierre Trudeau: the last Canadian?

Pierre Elliott Trudeau was, only a few years ago, one of the Western world's magic politicians; he deployed, as the picture on the right recalls (1968) all the public glamour of the Kennedys, with none of their reputation for sleazy deals behind the scenes. He was cited as a proof that in the electronic era, image counts for more than ideology. He was also, conspicuously, an amateur; yet for many years he symbolised the hope of a revitalised confederation and showed matchless ingenuity in conjuring-away the political and social tensions of an increasingly divided country.

The Canadian premier who arrives this week in Europe to confer with Callaghan and Giscard d'Estaing is a much more battered figure (the picture below is one sign of change). **CHARLOTTE GRAY** gives an account of a supremely talented political showman, whose charismatic resources may have finally given out.

PIERRE TRUDEAU, Prime Minister of Canada and the senior elected leader in the Western world, is in trouble. In mid-October the federal Liberal party, which has been in office for 60 of the last 82 years and is the self-styled 'natural party of government', suffered a crushing defeat in a series of 15 by-elections.

The latest opinion polls show the Progressive Conservative Party leading the Liberals by 42 per cent to 37 per cent – the first time it has been ahead for two years. On present showing, the Liberals could be wiped out in English-speaking Canada in the next General Election, due to be held by next July. The policies which Trudeau has championed in his ten years in office – strong central government, firm economic management, national unity and the survival of an open-spirited, bilingual federation – all look tattered or discredited.

The level of antagonism to Trudeau within English Canada today is hard to overestimate. Liberals throughout the nine English-speaking provinces returned from their mini-election campaigns stunned by the hostility directed at their leader. In five by-elections in Ontario, the pivotal area where the next election will be won or lost, the Liberal share of the vote shrank from 45 per cent at the last election to a meagre 25 per cent. Tory votes went up to 55 per cent from 38 per cent in 1974. It is quite a tumble for a man who in 1968 seemed to have the country at his feet.

In retrospect it is easy to explain some of the fissures in the love affair between Canadians and their Prime Minister. He appeared in a glow of novelty practically from nowhere in 1968, a sandalled sorcerer's apprentice who spoke in vote-catching euphemisms about the quality of life in a just society and called for 'new Guys with new ideas'. He fascinated the public. He was youthful (his antics on bannisters and trampolines still belie his present age of 59), attractive and sparkling; a flamboyant show-off. To a nation accustomed to politicians who were long on solemnity and short on style, his wit and warmth on the hustings seemed to promise a new deal for Canada; a future in which the two founding cultures might live together in an atmosphere of tolerance, and in which grave new initiatives in social and economic policy would emerge. He was a French voice in the federal capital, Ottawa, and symbolised the hope of a renewed confederation.

But the gap between promise and performance soon soured the tryst: the promises were as much media hype as a real emanation of the man. The expectations of inspirational leadership heaped on him were always unrealistic.

Trudeau has had to learn his political skills on the job. Before he became Prime Minister in a cloud of charisma in '68, he had only been in active politics for 29 months, for part of which he had been Federal Justice Minister and Attorney-General. Before this he had been an active commentator on the political scene, as founder and contributor to the influential Quebec political journal *Cité Libre*, but he had remained independent of the career politicians' arena. As a member of one of Montreal's wealthiest French Canadian families and a millionaire in his own right he could afford to pick and choose his pursuits: he practised and later lectured in law in Quebec but he only took on those cases (usually in the area of labour law and human rights) which particularly interested him. He flirted with socialism and became an outspoken libertarian. And he always seemed prepared to drop everything to go off on extensive, and frequently dangerous, foreign travels. He visited Burma during its civil war, Pakistan and Vietnam in 1959, China in 1960.

This rootlessness and lack of any full-time single occupation gave him a reputation as a dilettante; even now his critics comment acidly, 'of course, he has never had a proper job'. But throughout the period preceding his election as an MP he was developing his philosophy on the issue which most interests him: Canadian national unity.

Pierre Trudeau is first and foremost an intellectual. His sternest critics recognise that underneath the media hype there is a first-class brain ticking away. Whether Canadians now want or need a coldly logical leader is another matter. And the problem with media hype, and the way Trudeau has sharpened his political skills whilst in office, is that it has left Canadians confused and perplexed about who is the 'real' Mr Trudeau behind the kaleidoscope of images. What appears as intellectual detachment and acuity in the good times can look like arrogance and unconcern when things go badly. In 1968 he appeared as the playboy philosopher king; at the next election in 1972, he behaved like a chilly martinet, refusing to go through the motions expected of a political leader – pressing the flesh and rallying his troops with small messages of encouragement – and ended up with a minority government. Having learnt his lesson, he reappeared in the 1974 election as Action Man on the hustings, haranguing the crowds and tearing into his opponents. During the next couple of years his popularity plummetted again, but when the threat of a divided Canada loomed again in 1976, Trudeau re-emerged as the statesmanlike champion of federalism; the only man who could hold the country together.

BEHIND THE PARADE or images Trudeau has remained a consistently enigmatic figure, with few close friends. He has a steely ambition to succeed in whatever course he chooses, and does not suffer fools. He once dismissed members of parliament as 'just nobodies' whose place of work was the 'House of Comics'.

He is the product of a Jesuit education which taught him a Cartesian approach to problems and gave him his motto, 'reason over passion'. After he left school he studied law at the University of Montreal and then spent four years studying politics and economics at Harvard, the Ecole des Sciences Politique in Paris and the London School of Economics. This cosmopolitan education, combined with his perception of Quebec nationalism as potentially intolerant and discriminatory, bred in Trudeau an abhorrence of ideologies. 'I early realised that ideological systems are the true enemies of freedom . . . I am a pragmatist.'

But Trudeau equates freedom of choice with rationality; he does not acknowledge the individual's right to be irrational, to rely on emotion or instinct rather than intellect. He distrusted the passions he arose in 1968 and prefers to appeal to the public as an educator instead of a hero. Nevertheless when the chips are down and his popularity sinking, as was the case in 1974 or before the PQ victory in 1976, he makes the pragmatic decision to hide his contempt for heart-stirring rhetoric and get on with winning the battle by thrilling the crowds.

He can switch the charm on when necessary, but otherwise he has little time for sentiment and no gift for personal or professional relationships. His cabinet has been weakened by 27 resignations in his ten years of government; his private life disrupted by the arrival and departure of his wife Margaret. He has

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consistently refused to court journalists, to whom he has often appeared arrogantly dismissive, and he resents any intrusion into his personal affairs. 'I don't have much time for the press in the sense that I don't curry their favour or try to be palsy-walsy with them or butter them up.' The consequence is that the confused public perception of him has been further tinged by media antagonism.

Disenchantment with Trudeau after the intoxicating days of Trudeaumania was probably inevitable, but the shifting styles he has adopted often seemed to mirror switches in policy which looked as much like cynical bids for popularity as a pragmatic response to changing circumstances. As a social critic suddenly catapulted to active political power, he chose to operate on two levels. On the one hand there is the thinker and educator, wearing the mantle of activist reformer and champion of social justice, determined to maintain his individuality and demythologise politics; on the other hand the legislator and Prime Minister, cautious and conservative concerned to balance competing interests.

Economics has never been Trudeau's strong suit. He has said of himself, 'I am very eclectic . . . I have probably read more of Dostoyevsky, Stendhal and Tolstoy than the average statesman, and less of Keynes, Mill and Marx'. His critics prefer to call such eclecticism 'book of the month economics'; last season a little Galbraith, this season a touch of Friedman, next season Schumacher.

Canada is in bad economic shape. There is a $4 billion deficit on the current account and the Canadian dollar, which two years ago was trading at par with the American dollar, is now worth only 85 US cents – the lowest it has been since the Depression. The Canadian economy is inextricably linked to the American market, in which 70 percent of Canadian exports are sold, so every lurch downwards of the US dollar drags the Canadian dollar down with it. In October 1976 the pound bought $1.51 Canadian dollars; now it buys $2.34. Inflation and unemployment rates have climbed to 8 percent over the decade, and in a total population of 23 million almost a million are out of work. Can Canada afford eclecticism?

Trudeau's defence of his economic record is that Canada has done comparatively well in a decade of global economic crisis. He points out that though Canada's unemployment and inflation rates have closely paralleled those of the United States, Canada has not experienced one year in the last ten when its total production actually shrank as it has done in the States. Trudeau's social policy has provided Canadians with virtually cradle to grave security; the promise of the Just Society was not empty.

THERE ARE SIGNS that Trudeau, ever the pragmatist, is now moving to a more interventionist approach. In August, on his return from the Bonn summit meeting, he announced a series of economic measures that included a $2.5 billion cut in federal spending and the reallocation of an additional $1 billion to encourage industrial expansion and job creation. But the thrust of the package indicated that the federal government is looking to the private sector of the economy to stimulate the economy in the next couple of years.

Traditional liberals in the cabinet feel embattled and isolated as they watch their party and its leader, along with the country at large, drift to the right. They deplore their colleagues' transformation into recycled Tories, but there is little doubt that Trudeau intends to appeal to the electorate with a programme of reduced social spending and a shift from redistribution to the creation of wealth. He has left behind the welfare-stateism of the '60s and early '70s.

In adopting a programme of spending cuts, Trudeau grabbed some of the planks from the Conservative Party's platform. At the time of the heist, an October election seemed likely and the Tories were all set to base their campaign strategy on attacking the government's economic and spending record, which was already getting a bad press. But as the nationwide distrust of Trudeau filtered into the polls and his strategists realised victory might be out of his grasp, Trudeau settled for a trial run in the by-elections and a promise of a spring election. The by-elections proved a disaster for the Liberals; now the party backroom boys are left scrabbling round for some new formula.

It looks as though they will try to pin their efforts on the issue which originally brought Trudeau to Ottawa and with which he has always been most closely identified; the relationship between French-speaking Quebec and the other nine provinces. If Trudeau stands for anything it is for Confederation. As he wrote in *Cité Libre*, ethnically-based governments are 'by nature intolerant, discriminatory and, when all is said and done, totalitarian.'

Since the separatist René Levesque became premier of Quebec in 1976 Trudeau has pushed for constitutional reforms to allow greater provincial autonomy and input into the central government. At a constitutional conference this autumn attended by the ten provincial premiers he demonstrated more flexibility than ever before on the question of which level of government should decide what. His appeal to Quebecers is still strong; Quebec was the one area where the Liberals did well in the October by-elections and the Tories are chronically weak.

But for many English Canadians it is too little too late. The predominantly Tory English-speaking premiers, who have their own reasons for wanting less central government especially in areas like taxation and natural resource policy, showed they felt they had nothing to lose by adopting a 'wait and see' attitude to the future; a change of government could offer them more. The Western provinces are already sick of having French 'rammed down their throats' and there is a feeling that the separatist threat is probably past and Quebec has been centre stage too long. And the complicated language of constitutional reform has never been a crowd-stirrer.

THREE POSSIBLE scenarios are emerging for the events of the next few months. The first is that Trudeau, by now a skilful political survivor, manages to tilt the verdict in the coming general election by agility on the Quebec question, an upturn on the economy, and emphasis on his reputation as a world-class statesman. But the economic prospects are not good and it will take a lot to dissipate the personal hostility to him.

The second scenario is that the Tories win the spring election. With the Liberals in a

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nose-dive and the Prime Minister with his back to the wall, the Conservative future should look assured. But they have two problems. The first is their lack of support in Quebec; they only hold two of the 74 Quebec seats. If they won the election with overwhelmingly Anglo-Canadian backing, René Levesque would have a good case for saying to French Canadians in Quebec that they have been rejected by English Canada so Confederation can offer them nothing. Levesque is committed to holding a referendum on Quebec's future status within the next 18 months; a Tory victory would play into his hands. For this reason federalists among English Canadians may prefer to stay with the faded champion of bilingual Canada, Trudeau, rather than vote Conservative and perhaps precipitate Quebec's secession.

The other Tory handicap is their leader, 38-year-old Joe Clark, who was the compromise candidate in the 1977 leadership convention. He was promptly tagged 'Joe Who?' Clark is trying to develop a statesmanlike image and appeal to Quebec federalists by a combination of careful grooming and discussions with provincial premiers on decentralised government. The message he brings is that the heady days of strong central government are over; he wants to boost the powers of the premiers and the private sector. But Clark still looks like a political Bambi, an intellectual lightweight next to Trudeau.

If the Progressive Conservatives did win the election, despite their handicaps, it is hard to tell what Trudeau would do. His personality may be enigmatic but one thing has always been clear – he hates to lose. It is unlikely that he would stick around to be leader of the opposition for long. He has too much pride and too little respect for Joe Clark.

The third possible scenario is that Trudeau, seeing the writing on the wall, does not even wait around until the election. There is talk of a leadership convention, at which Trudeau would step down in favour of one of the 27 resignees from his cabinet.

But Trudeau himself is the only man who could call such a leadership convention. He will have to make the choice between staying to fight separatism, as he has always said he would, or quitting because his personal unpopularity makes the only alternative seem to be a Tory government elected exclusively from English Canada.

In a recent triumph of rhetoric he asked, 'Who will speak for Canada?' Whether Canadians still want Trudeau to speak for Canada will undoubtedly be decided within the next few months.

COMMUNISM
Roger Boyes

The Gestapo's role in the ice-pick affair

Trotsky's death: the Nazi link

RAMON MERCADER, the assassin of Leon Trotsky and a man with more aliases than friends, died a quiet death last month. That, at any rate, is the official version. Mercader's death, according to his brother Luis, followed a long confinement in a Havana clinic where he was treated for an obscure form of bone cancer.

But is Ramon Mercader alias Frank Jacson alias Jacques Mornard alias Jacques Vandendreschd really dead? Among Mercader's acquaintances in the West there appears to be considerable doubt about the circumstances of his death. Considerable suspicion too about why the death should have been announced at all. There are certainly good reasons for doubting the official line, as peddled by brother Luis who has lived in Moscow for the past 40 years, working as a lecturer in the main Radio Communications Institute. In the past, although Luis has been willing enough to see Western correspondents, his information has tended to obscure rather than illuminate the life of his brother. The latest announcement has all the hallmarks of a piece of 'disinformation', the classic Soviet tactic of distorted revelation.

In the first place, Mercader appears to have been nowhere near Cuba recently. On 12 October, six days before Mercader's death was announced, a correspondent of the Spanish news agency EFE – acting on a tipoff – visited the clinic where the assassin was supposed to be staying. The deputy director of the clinic, Major Agramonte, flatly denied that Mercader had ever been treated there. By itself, this is hardly conclusive evidence one way or another – Cuban bureaucracy is notorious for its obfuscations.

According to Luis, for instance, Ramon had been in Havana for treatment for over 18 months before his death. Yet at the end of May 1977 he was seen at the Warsaw Book Fair, apparently sounding out Western publishers about the possible publication of his memoirs in the US and Western Europe. In a conversation with the Czech *emigré* Ota Filip (representing the West German Fischer Verlag at the fair), Mercader disclosed that he had applied to vist Yugoslavia. The aim was apparently to smuggle out his memoirs to the West – the Yugoslavia route being an accepted conduit for manuscripts by East European dissidents.

Trotsky after his death in Mexico City

Soviet experts in London also point out that there was no good reason for Mercader to visit a Cuban clinic for cancer treatment. The Soviet Union, where Mercader has lived for most of the time since his release from a Mexican prison (he was given 20 years for the Trotsky murder), prides itself on its cancer institutes and recently even claimed to have made a breakthrough in bone cancer research. Perhaps Mercader was anxious to die just across the water from Mexico where he buried the claw of an ice-pick in Trotsky's head 38 years ago. Western friends of Mercader shrug their shoulders in disbelief at the suggestion: too Hollywood; completely out of character for the diffident unsentimental Mercader.

The strongest doubts about Mercader's death stem from the testimony of Hanus Weber, a Czech television journalist who fled Prague in 1968 and who now works for Swedish television. Weber, who knew Mercader in Prague where the assassin lived for a short while before settling in Moscow, claims to have received a letter from him in September. Postmark: Moscow. There was no hint that he was suffering from a fatal illness, no suggestion that he had been in Cuba recently.

So why should the Soviet Union bother to issue an inaccurate statement on Mercader's death? The key to the mystery, it now emerges, is Mercader's autobiography which he has been working on since his release from prison. The memoirs, according to Weber, almost certainly reflect a growing disillusionment with the Soviet regime. In Prague, Mercader had welcomed the advent of Dubcek socialism. Later, he was known to have been sympathetic towards Socialist dissidents in the Soviet Union, notably the historian Roy Medvedev. As sections of the memoirs are now understood to have been deposited with various middlemen to be forwarded to the West, there are clearly grounds for concern in Moscow. 'The Kremlin,' maintains Weber, 'would obviously want either to prevent the book reaching the West or, failing this, to discredit the book completely. They could best do this with a "dead" Mercader.'

Traces of a lingering sympathy with Trotskyism could also have crept into the memoirs. In Prague, Mercader worked (under an alias) as a researcher at the Institute of Marxism-Leninism where he specialised in the writings of Trotsky. While keeping to the broad framework of the Soviet line – stressing Trotsky's anti-Leninist background – he had also underlined links between Trotskyism and 'Western' Marxism. Mercader, according to a former colleague (now living in West Germany), sometimes quoted with approval Trotsky's attack on Leninist centralism: the organisation of the Party takes the place of the Party itself, the Central Committee of the Party takes the place of the organisation; and, finally, the dictator takes the place of the Central Committee.' This is strong stuff for Eastern Europe and was only just permissible even in the days of the Prague Spring.

But the most significant part of Mercader's book will be his account of the background to the assassination. There are indications that this could contain a radically new perspective on the affair – and that this is the section of Mercader's story which the Soviet Union wants to suppress. Ever since the assassination on 20 August 1940, it has been assumed in the

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West that Trotsky was the victim of the GPU, Stalin's security police. Stalin's hatred of Trotsky was an open secret and from about 1936 Trotsky regularly accused the Russians of plotting his murder. Yet Stalin's low-key treatment of Mercader (why, for example, did he not put pressure on Mexico to secure the assassin's release?). Luis Mercader's reticence on the subject and the shaky assumptions on which Trotsky's widow's account of the murder is based, suggest that the GPU connection is only a partial explanation.

An alternative version was given to the NEW STATESMAN last week by an elderly Catalan *emigré*, a close friend of Mercader's politically active mother, Caridad, who died in Paris three years ago. The Mercader plot, the *emigré* claimed, was the work of the Gestapo and not the GPU.

Set in the context of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, this theory is not as ludicrous as it first sounds. Even before the pact, Nazi Germany saw Trotsky as a threat, the head of a dangerous Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy. Several mass-circulation NSDAP publications warned of Trotsky's links with international banking circles and his determination to overthrow the Nazi system as well as Stalin. Trotsky, of course, opposed the pact and his contempt for Stalin spilled over into warnings about the evils of Nazism.

Indicating that he drew his information from Caridad Mercader, the Catalan explained that there were in fact two plots to murder Trotsky, one organised by the GPU and the other by the Gestapo. The GPU plot was clumsy and ill-planned and its timing must have meant, pact or no pact, that there was little communication between the two spy services.

The GPU attempt was supervised by David Alfaro Siqueiros, an artist and a former member of the Mexican Communist Party. Three months before the Mercader attempt, two dozen armed men broke into Trotsky's fortified home at Coyoacan and sprayed bullets into each room. The only person to be killed however was Robert Sheldon Harte, the gatekeeper, who was kidnapped by the raiders – there were strong suspicions at the time that he actually worked for the GPU but nothing was ever proved. A mysterious 'French Jew' seen at the raid was said to be the main GPU agent but he was never traced.

According to Natalia Sedova Trotsky, Trotsky's widow, Mercader was then ordered by Stalin to finish off the job. But again she advances no evidence for this and other contemporary writers – all assuming *a priori* that Mercader was a Stalinist agent – failed to convince. Victor Serge, a faithful friend of Trotsky, the Mexican police chief Leandro Sanchez Salazar (under intense pressure to solve the case) and Louis Budenz (a disillusioned member of the American CP) have been unable to establish a direct connection between the Siqueiros raid and the Mercader assassination. Even the recent memoirs of Valentin Campa, head of the Mexican CP at the time, do no more than establish ties between the GPU and the Siqueiros raid.

The two plots were so dramatically different in style that, in retrospect, it seems obvious that they were planned by different organisations. The Siqueiros raid was almost amateur in execution and had clearly been planned no more than two months before when Sheldon Harte entered the employ of the Trotsky household. The Mercader assassination by contrast must have been planned some two years ahead. This was when Mercader first met Sylvia Agelof, a member of the US Trotskyite movement who rapidly became his lover and introduced him to the Trotskys.

On the left Trotsky's grave in Mexico and on the right Ramon Mercader, the assassin, bandaged after his struggle with Trotsky's guards. Hitherto he has been assumed to have been working for Stalin.

According to my Catalan informant, Mercader was recruited by the Gestapo in Paris in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War. It was a time of considerable ideological confusion and a prime recruiting time for security services throughout Europe. Mercader must have seemed like an ideal recruit. He was unhappy with Trotsky's later declarations and writings, unhappy above all about his mother's affair with Leonid Eitingon whom he believed, probably correctly, to be a GPU officer. Later, Mercader's association with Sylvia Agelof who represented a breakaway part of the Trotskyite movement reinforced his feeling that true revenge could be had only through the murder of Trotsky. Somehow Trotsky came to symbolise for Mercader the betrayal which had so deeply wounded him. The Gestapo meanwhile supplied the organisation.

That, at least, is the Catalan's version and, by implication, that of Caridad Mercader. Much of it rings true. After the Siqueiros raid, for instance, Mercader visited New York – to be briefed by the GPU, if Natalia Trotsky is to be believed. Yet former GPU agents (notably Grigori Agabekov) have written of how undermanned the GPU cell was in both North and Central America during the 1920s and 1930s. The Gestapo, by contrast, was there in force. In 1940, the GPU was still an extremely weak organisation internationally and successful missions were few and far between. The long-term infiltration of the Trotsky household, the immaculately forged Belgian passport – these point to the work of a more highly developed organisation than the GPU.

A connection between the Gestapo and the assassination would certainly explain the extreme embarrassment of the Soviet Union over the missing memoirs. Clearly the murder by the Germans of the Soviet arch-enemy after a bungled GPU attempt would not qualify Moscow's finest hour. Nor do Soviet publications, like the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, exactly overplay the importance of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. But of course, if Mercader really is dead, only the memoirs will give a reasonably accurate picture of the assassination. Old assassins it seems never die; they simply fade away.

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1974 - 1978

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CRIMINAL LAW
David Clark

Police hunt anarchists, fail to find explosions

A Saga of 'Persons Unknown'

THIS WEEK RONAN BENNETT makes his 28th remand appearance at Lambeth Magistrates' Court, South London. The 21-year-old anarchist was arrested last May with his girlfriend Iris Mills, in a blaze of sensational reporting. In ensuing weeks, police raided more than 30 anarchist and libertarian homes in London, Yorkshire and the Bristol area. Four more arrests were made and the six were charged with 'conspiracy to cause explosions'. Their friends and supporters have formed a group called 'Persons Unknown', after the wording of the original charge which accused Bennett and Mills of conspiring with 'a person or persons unknown'.

At the time, the police gave the impression that they had uncovered a gang of anarchist bombers intent on overthrowing society. The Anti-Terrorist Squad (which had been reduced since the height of the IRA campaign from 220 to 30) worked hard on its new case, producing over a thousand pages of documentation and taking a full five months, from the time of the first arrests, to build up enough evidence to present to the Attorney General.

Two weeks ago, however, it emerged that not even Sam Silkin saw fit to give them the go-ahead. The charges of 'conspiracy to cause explosions' have been dropped against all six defendants. Instead, they have now been charged with 'conspiracy to rob'. Two of the six have been released on bail; the other four remain category 'A' prisoners at Brixton. Defence lawyers think they'll be lucky to get a committal hearing before Christmas, or a trial much before autumn next year.

The strange affair of Persons Unknown started at seven in the morning of Wednesday 24 May when police officers claiming to be from the local CID turned up at a fifth floor flat in a smart house in Kensington Gardens Square, Bayswater. The flat belongs to an actress, Vanessa Furse, but had been lent to a friend of hers, Iris Mills, and her boyfriend, Ronan Bennett. The police brought a warrant with them which empowered them to search for blank National Insurance cards apparently connected with Iris Mills' former employment in Huddersfield.

Their search revealed anarchist literature and documentation relating to the Prevention of Terrorism Act. They arrested Mills and Bennett, taking them first to the local police station and then to Paddington Green to await the Anti-Terrorist Squad. After a further search of the flat, they took away two tins of sodium chlorate weed-killer, bags of domestic flour and sugar and further documentation. According to police submissions during later bail applications, this documentation included a birth certificate with a false name, a copy of the *Anarchist Cookbook*, a passport bearing Ronan Bennett's photograph but made out in the name of 'Mark Hodson', and other papers and passports bearing false names.

Bennett and Mills were originally told they were being held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act – as were the press. The defendants were not allowed to contact a lawyer for two days, nor did the press print their names. Yet there was no subsequent mention of the PTA. We shall have to wait for the trial to learn exactly what the police were up to at that stage, although a certain insight was provided by the *Daily Telegraph*.

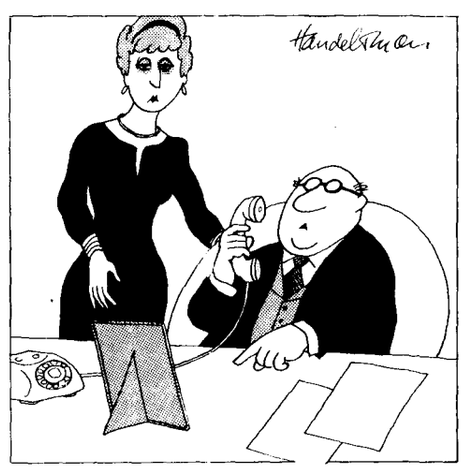
In a front-page story under the headline 'Bomb material seized in hunt for anarchists', *Telegraph* crime reporter John Weeks speculated that there 'could be an anarchist cell operating in Britain'. For several months, he explained, the Anti-Terrorist Squad had been investigating the activities of an anarchist group formed on the lines of the Angry Brigade'. 'The group has no name and is a loose organisation of anarchists who help various causes.' Weeks operates from the press room at Scotland Yard, so is well placed to record police thinking.

The *Daily Mirror* took up the theme of a 'new Angry Brigade' and the *Sun* managed a comparison with Italy's Red Brigades. The following day's *Telegraph* told us: 'A number of robberies which may have been used to finance the activities of an anarchist cell operating in Britain were being checked last night'. The general air of mystery was heightened by a police press statement warning the public not to go near a J-registration Fiat, and linking the car with the recent arrests. It was later found crashed in Wales but hasn't been mentioned since by anyone.

Bennett and Mills were taken to Marylebone Magistrates' Court on 27 May, charged with 'conspiracy to cause explosions'. The ATS then began its raids on anarchist and libertarian homes. Some of the searches seemed fairly arbitrary, but others were guided by fingerprints found in Ms Furse's flat. The next week, Dafydd Ladd, a Welsh anarchist and friend of Bennett and Mills appeared at Marylebone, jointly charged with conspiring to cause explosions.

At that point, Detective Chief Superintendent Peter Bradbury, a rising star in the police force who was in charge of the case, asked that the remand hearings be transferred to the smaller and more secure Lambeth Court. Opposing bail for Ladd, he uttered the words which have since become a slogan for the support group: 'Ladd is one of a group of idealistic persons who believe they should take positive steps to overthrow society'. Later he changed 'society' for 'authority' and stressed that there were 'others still at large with whom they could associate and make efforts to carry out their intentions'.

The remand hearings have been subject to top-security treatment. Armed policemen in flak jackets keep the public out of the small Lambeth side street where the court sits; photographers take pictures of those going



'Miss Collins, please remove this picture of the Shah and replace it with one of Ceausescu.'

Oilgate notebook

■ Cledwyn Hughes' safari to Zambia may bring back memories of an earlier trip. In December 1965, during a similar mission to Lusaka, he first received news of the oil embargo. Hughes picked up the phone at the British High Commission to be greeted with a howl of static. To begin with he didn't understand a word. It turned out to be George Brown who was having to shout down the phone from London to tell him that Britain had agreed to oil sanctions. Somehow that call was to symbolise the faulty communications over oil that were to plague the attempt to cut Smith's oil lifeline.

■ As far as I can see the word 'cheating' only crops up once in the Bingham Report – when BP feared that Shell was trying to grab more than its fair share of the Rhodesian trade. Back in 1974 the two British oil companies reorganised their marketing activities in South Africa. BP director Alan Robertson had been particularly concerned about the Freight Services sales: 'Because of the way the accounting had been done, it might be . . . quietly slipped through a net and end up in Shell's hands. There were various categories of trade where the possibility (to put it crudely) of cheating seemed to those involved at the time to be greater.'

■ BP is doing its bit to reduce South Africa's dangerous dependence on imported oil. A £200 million scheme is being initiated to turn surplus maize and sugar cane into ethanol (which can be added to petrol). The project is being operated by Sentrachem, in which BP is one of the major partners. Perhaps it's BP's way or proving to the South Africans that it's a good patriotic company. BP South Africa must feel that it has to restore its reputation in the wake of its treacherous attempt to sever connections with Rhodesia.

■ Why is it that ministers have always appeared so self-righteous over sanctions? In March 1977 a detailed report was published which alleged that Shell and BP were supplying Rhodesia through Freight Services. One might have thought that the Government would have welcomed this bit of intelligence information. But Ted Rowlands warned MPs not to take the matter too seriously. It would be investigated by the 'well-known and established procedure'. But, he added, 'there have been occasions in the past when evidence that has been brought forward on this score has not proved sound enough to take action.' The Government was 'generally satisfied with the observance of sanctions by United Kingdom firms, but where we have evidence suggesting breaches of sanctions we certainly investigate these. Our record in this respect is second to none.'

Martin Bailey

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into court; defendants arrive in a high speed convoy escorted by armed traffic police. At the beginning lawyers were denied access to their clients, press numbers were severely limited in the court, and only a handful of the public were allowed in. Two support committee members have been arrested outside – one for chalking an anarchist slogan on the wall, one for 'obstruction'. The presence of armed policemen on the roof and in the well of the court contributes to the atmosphere of a dangerous conspiracy.

Towards the end of June a fourth person, Stewart Carr, was arrested in Kent and held incommunicado for five days before being charged with conspiracy to cause explosions. Carr had lived with Bennett, Mills and Ladd in East London for a short period earlier in the year. He has since been charged, in addition, with taking part in six specified armed robberies. None of the other defendants has actually been charged with the robberies – only with 'conspiracy to rob'.

Then, on 4 July, Vincent Stevenson, 24, was arrested on his way to a support group meeting at Rising Free, the left-wing bookshop in Islington. He was held for five days before being charged with conspiracy. During the course of his questioning he gave police the address of a flat on an Islington housing estate which a key in his possession fitted. There they found a holdall containing six handguns, some literature and more than a thousand rounds of assorted ammunition.

The flat belongs to a woman who was questioned and then released without being charged. Stevenson apparently used the room occasionally, as did Trevor Dawton, a 20-year-old student who was arrested two days after Stevenson. In cross-examination police have alleged that Stevenson was a regular visitor to the East End premises rented by Carr and Ladd. He had been traced through a fingerprint on a newspaper found there.

In September the police held a massive series of identity parades which don't appear to have produced anything very concrete. As a result Dawton was released on bail with two sureties of £10,000 each on condition that he lives with his parents in Farnborough, observes a curfew and reports to the police every day. During cross-examination on his bail application, it emerged that neither Dawton nor Stevenson's fingerprints were found on the holdall or the guns. Fingerprints were found on the literature in the bag and police claim they belong to two of the six defendants, although they have not given their names in court.

Iris Mills was released on bail on 26 October. The conditions under which she was kept in Brixton prior to that have given rise to a campaign to stop remanding women in men's prisons. (Why, if she is now deemed harmless enough to be released on bail, was she previously treated as though too dangerous to be remanded in Holloway?)

On the day that the explosions charges were dropped against the six, Ronan Bennett made his first application for bail. His mother came to court from Northern Ireland and offered £4,000 cash and her own house as surety for him. Monsignor Bruce Kent, a catholic priest who is chairperson of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, offered Bennett accommodation in his presbytery; and a further surety of £1,000 was made available. However, the magistrates ignored the lawyer's plea that the changed charges reflected a completely different case, and turned down the bail application, citing the false passport. Despite pleas from their lawyers, neither Ladd nor Stevenson has been released on bail.

Bomb flat: Hunt for terror gang

Standard Reporter

DETECTIVES from Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist squad today tried to trace the associates of a young couple arrested after a raid on a Basswater flat, where bomb-making equipment was found.

They were searching for a new gang of anarchists, thought to be responsible for a bank robbery several weeks ago.

Detectives swooped on a top floor flat in Kensington Gardens Square and detained a couple under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, allowing police to hold them for seven days without charge.

The couple were led away in handcuffs and taken for questioning to Paddington Green police station.

Chemicals which produce an explosive substance if mixed were found plus some wire.

The two-room flat was rented by actress Vanessa Furse, 27.

She said that she had passed the keys to a girl friend, also an actress, and an Ulster man, believed to be in his early twenties, and she was away touring Scotland for several months.

Miss Furse, at present appearing at Lady Macbeth and the first witch in a production of Macbeth at the Arts Theatre, said: "I suggested she should move in while I was away because she was not living in a very nice place. I knew she had a boyfriend from Northern Ireland. He is very young. I suppose about 21, 22. But I had no idea that anything like this was involved."

She added: "I am in a state of shock. When I let the flat I knew the girl quite well but not the boy very well."

She had rented the flat to the pair about five months after meeting her.

She and I worked in an antiques market in Dover Street. We were on chalk next to each other."

Miss Furse recently had a part in the film The Hiding Place set in a Nazi concentration camp and starring American actress Eileen Heckart and Julie Harris.

Mr Robert Jones, 30, who lives in the basement flat of the recently - converted Georgian block said: "There were half a dozen policemen crawling all over the place.

Another neighbour said: "Miss Furse introduced me to the man and I didn't really take much notice. She introduced him as Nick. I would know him by sight quite well as we used to meet in the street. I don't think I would recognise him again."

It is understood that Yard men rule out any IRA connection at this stage.

Police took away several plastic bags from the flat comprising a lounge, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom, and let it at £18 a week.

A spokesman for the owners of the property, the GMS syndicate of London, said: "Most flats must have tenants. The last to move people in was a girl who lives here."

THE RAIDED FLAT is on the top floor of this building in Kensington Gardens Square.

VANESSA FURSE: "I had no idea that anything like this was involved."

Evening Standard, 25 May 1978

Police acknowledged from the start that there hadn't actually been any explosions. They cite one alleged explosion in the East London house which Bennett and Mills were sharing with Ladd – and claim it was a 'practice run'. Apparently there once was a loud bang and the 'conspirators' went round to apologise to the neighbours. Back in July, Chief Superintendent Bradbury explained the lack of explosions by saying that the police had 'nipped the conspiracy in the bud'. He has since been relieved of the case by Detective Inspector McLellan.

In addition to the charges of conspiracy to rob, Ronan Bennett and Iris Mills are charged with possessing explosives (the weedkiller, not the flour or the sugar). They are also charged, together with Dafydd Ladd, with possessing a stolen firearm (an air pistol) and dishonestly handling a .22 rifle for which they had no licence. Stewart Carr is charged with six robberies. Trevor Dawton and Vincent Stevenson are charged with handling of stolen firearms.

More of the Great Anarchist Terrorist Conspiracy may be revealed at the committal proceedings – whenever they may be – but so far it looks like another case of Britain's over-reactionary political police.

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London Diary

☐ Edward Thompson writes in a foreword to a new book by State Research that socialists have lost their enthusiasm for civil liberties. I must remind him that that sort of talk is very much out of date nowdays. Thanks to the last Labour Government, we now have a Parliamentary Commissioner, or Ombudsman, who looks after our civil liberties for us. And now Mr Callaghan, in one of his most inspired appointments, has given us a new one. From 3 January all aggrieved underdogs can apply for relief (through their MPs, please) to Mr Cecil Montacute Clothier, QC.

Mr Clothier – or 'Spike' as he is affectionately known – is a wealthy barrister, who specialises in medical law. He has for many years worked on the closest possible terms with the medical establishment. He is the 'legal assessor' to the doctors' general medical council and to the dentists' council. He is also chairman of the national joint committee of the medical and pharmaceutical professions. He advised ICI in their long battle with people who took their heart drug Eraldin and developed all sorts of disgusting side effects. Thanks to the skill of barristers like Mr Clothier, ICI have avoided legal liability for the damage done by Eraldin, and have now paid off 1,100 of the 2,000 people who claimed to have been injured by the drug. 'I've represented ICI since 1954,' Mr Clothier told me, cheerfully.

Spike also served on the Royal Commission on the Health Service, and surprised some of his colleagues with his devotion to the rights of doctors. All this experience will stand him in good stead, since the majority of complaints to the Ombudsman are still from people who feel they have been let down by doctors, drug companies or hospital administrations.

Mr Clothier also has experience on the bench – as an Appeal Judge in that haven of civilised justice, the Isle of Man. He lives comfortably in a farmhouse in Sussex, not very far from the farmhouse of another great civil libertarian, James Callaghan.

☐ 'I screwed it up. I paid the price'. This historic statement by Richard Nixon about Watergate brought the young leaders of the future at the Oxford Union to an ecstacy of applause. But it's not quite right, is it? Nixon 'screwed it up' all right, in the sense that the web of corruption which he spun in order to hold on to Presidential power forever was discovered. But *he* did not pay the price. His *subordinates* went to prison for the crimes which he inspired and ordered. Nixon was pardoned. He was above prosecution. As the old saying has it: 'You can't harm me. My best friend is the Director of Public Prosecutions'.

Now he is feted. The most revolting aspect of his visit here was the unanimous conclusion of his flatterers that 'he did a lot for world peace'. Anyone who believes that should read Anthony Sampson's account, in his book on the arms industry, of Nixon's visit to Iran in 1973. In one abrupt order, Nixon lifted all the restrictions on arms sales to 'Third World' countries like Iran. His order delighted his pals and paymasters in Lockheed and other arms firms. But it brought a world war a hundred times closer.

Not all the shame of Nixon's visit, by the way, should be heaped on the Oxford Union. Daniel Janner, 21, President of the Cambrige Union, son of Greville Janner, Labour MP for Leicester West, who is the son of Lord Janner, former Labour MP for Leicester West, was quick to jump in on the act. He went to breakfast with Nixon at Claridges and described it as 'the most fantastic hour of my life'. More fantastic, even, than young Mr Janner's expedition to the House of Commons from Cambridge only two weeks earlier, with 200 members of the Union, to cheer and snivel at the feet of Indira Gandhi, the former tyrant of India. Daniel, his dad and grandad had their picture taken with Indira. He will go far. He could even become Labour MP for Leicester West.

☐ I was interested to see that my old comrade John Smith has been appointed to succeed Edward Dell as Minister for Trade in the Cabinet. I first met John in 1962 in Glasgow, where he was a law student. We were on opposite sides at the famous selection conference to pick a Labour candidate for a by-election in the Woodside constituency. I was for the left-wing Neil Carmichael; he for the right-wing Arthur Houston (Carmichael won). Some of us were rather surprised to see John as a delegate to the conference, as he had never been to the general management committee before, and, as far as we knew, hadn't taken part in local Labour Party activities. Indeed there were so many people at the conference – 310, if my memory serves me right, of whom only about 40 were constituency activists – that an inquiry was set up afterwards into their credentials. It revealed that John Smith had come along from a branch of the general and municipal workers union (then the NUGMW) which, as far as we could discover, did not exist, which had not existed for two years, and which, when it did exist, had represented women cleaners at a municipal bus depot.

☐ I am glad that Rebecca Fears, a black woman with five children, has won her case alleging racial discrimination against a Walsall council hostel. She'd been recommended for a job, but was refused it as soon as she arrived. The job went to a white woman. But I hope no one has the cheek to hail this a great victory for the new Race Relations Act, which for the first time allows people to go direct to industrial tribunals to charge employers with discrimination at work. So far, the tribunals have proved a disaster for black applicants, who can't get legal aid, who very rarely persuade trade unions to pay for a lawyer, and who are systematically humiliated by the employers' lawyers. I have come across the figures for the cases at industrial tribunals up to 13 October. Out of 292 decisions only 11 have been in favour of the applicants.

☐ One of the happiest men in town this week is Jake Ecclestone, the father of the Journalists' main chapel at *The Times*. Jake's the son of a parson, and when he took *The Times* job in 1975 he was known as a bit of a red. 'They didn't like my politics, but I think they trusted me', he says of his chapel members, who include some of the most famous names in journalism. Jake's joy is that *The Times* chapel have finally proved themselves decent trade unionists. Their decision on 30 November, the day *The Times* closed down, to reject the management's proposals for new technology and new payments was a much bigger body blow to *The Times* management than anything yet decided by the print-workers.

It was, by all accounts, an extraordinary meeting. About 25 people spoke. The issue was a very simple one. No one doubted that the management proposals were mean, slipshod and a kick in the teeth. The question was, should the journalists *accept* the kick in the teeth? Some said, yes they should. Ed Mortimer, for instance, a foreign leader writer, made probably the best speech of the meeting claiming that *Times* journalists would never have the guts to close down the paper on their own, and that they should accept the proposals at least for another year. Geraldine Norman, who reports from the sale rooms, said that she just didn't think the journalists were 'strong enough'.

It seemed for much of the debate as though these arguments would win the day. But there were several powerful speeches on the other side. Paul Routledge, Labour editor described *The Times* management as the worst in his long experience. Maurice Corina, of *The Times Business News*, pulled *The Times'* financial proposals to pieces. Margaret Allen, features editor, said simply that she couldn't go home and admit to her children that she had surrendered. Michael Baily, Transport correspondent, said 'I didn't mind being emotional — I do mind being bullied'.

The journalists knew when they voted that if they rejected the proposals, they would be sacked. Yet they voted 142 to 92 to reject them. In some elation, they returned to their desks and started to produce copy for the following day. In sudden panic, a management man rushed down with a notice. It wasn't as expected, the suspension notice. That came a quarter of an hour later. It was a warning that anyone who tried to produce a pirate edition of *The Times* would be instantly dismissed. Perhaps the managers felt that if the journalists could vote as they had done, they might start and edit a *Times* better without the management than with it.

Paul Foot

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ And punk? 'For women one good thing about punk was that you didn't have to be a gorgeous sex object — all you had to be was a bundle of energy and revolt. And what about the woman at the Carnival who wore a tampon dangling off her earring. Quite a statement!' – *Time Out* (J. Redmayne)

☐ I just cannot make my husband understand how embarrassing, and out of place, it would be to be entertained by an ex-servant. This is causing trouble between us. – *Brighton Evening Argus* (W. McIlroy)

☐ A group of Bovingdon residents have come up with what they hope will be a foolproof plan to stop vandals and noisy children making their lives a misery. Six householders in Arden Close and Pembridge Close and Chase, have thought of an ingenious scheme to stop the 'little monsters' playing on the nearby playground, disturbing everyone around. They hope to buy the site and use it to extend their gardens – *Hemel Hempstead Gazette* (Frank Edmead)

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Closures and disclosures

Sir, Duncan Campbell's interesting comments on the closure of Aldermaston's plutonium facilities (NS 1 December) illustrate the paradox that excessive secrecy has succeeded where the Queen's enemies and peace marchers failed. Unnecessary communication restraints such as Section Two may have contributed to the calamity in that managers of plutonium facilities at Aldermaston, like myself, have asked internally for many years for better radiological monitoring, more professional managers and scrutiny by outside safety experts, particularly on non-secret plants. Restraints have also precluded managerial comment reaching the public, although trade union members seem to have had full access to the media.

The curious and related case of my industrial tribunal application against the MoD may be of interest. Soon after I eventually obtained agreement to the use of personal air samplers in my plants, in August 1977, and the information they provided started the chain of events which led clumsily to the shutdown a year later, my requests for leave to attend county council meetings were refused for the first time for six years, although I had only spent half my 18 days annual allocation. After discussion was refused I applied to the Office of Industrial Tribunals. This led to the disclosure that the refusal was because I should not be granted public duty leave while I claimed to be short of professional managers. This in spite of the fact that a staffing survey in 1970 had recommended an increase, and after an application to the tribunal my complement was doubled.

Other curious aspects were that the Treasury Solicitor not only refused to attend conciliation meetings but instructed my previous chief, who had volunteered to give evidence as to my previous conscientious behaviour as a civil servant and councillor, to withdraw his offer but not to disclose that he had been so instructed; and later took me to an appeal court to have a witness order on the Deputy Director revoked on the grounds that his absence from work would interfere with the Pochin inquiry, even though I had offered the MoD a delay until it was completed. The Personnel Officer admitted in court that he had received no new instructions on public duty leave following the Employment Protection Act, which since 1977 had placed an obligation on employers, including the civil service, to give such leave. Although the court found that the MoD must in future answer requests for council leave at least three days before a meeting, the retirement 'into chambers' when the Deputy Director became confused and ill during cross-examination has meant that some aspects of this case have also been obscured from public view.

TREVOR BROWN

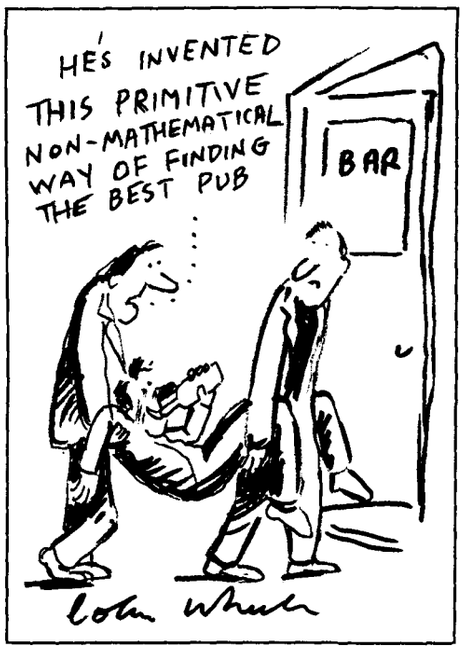
2 The Glade
Newbury, Berkshire

The Young System

Sir, It is always pleasing to see a useful mathematical idea enter the public domain, as in the article by Pierre Young (NS 24 November). But it is worth adding that the method which he proposes needs a slight change if it is to produce the best chance of success.

The principle of looking at a sample of the total number of n pubs to establish a standard is correct. However, there is a better sample than just one pub; intuitively, the size of the sample ought to depend on n. A rough approximation to the best size is in fact n/e, where e is about 2.7183. In that case the probability of finding the best pub is 50 per cent for $n=2$, as in the published method, but it never falls below $1/e$, or about 37 per cent, no matter how large n is. Rather better than the 28 per cent quoted in the article!

The number e has political as well as touristic significance. For example, for the benefit of any of your readers who wish to organise a realistic spy network in which each member above the bottom



rank should command a cell with a fixed number of subordinates, the network will suffer the least damage by the infiltration or destruction of a cell if this fixed number is e. Perhaps a specialist in a field different from mine can suggest how to obtain 71.83 per cent of a spy.

J. A. CAMPBELL

University Physics Building
Stocker Road
Exter

Sir, It must be twenty years since I heard a more general version of the Young System in Cambridge mathematical circles. Given a series of n once-and-for-all choices, the first n should be used to sample quality, then the next of the series matching the best of m should be chosen. If n is very large, then the ratio $m/n = 1/e$ (a mathematical constant) gives the maximum possibility of choosing the best of the series. The ratio $1/e$ is about 0.37.

The practical example used to be given of a man 'choosing' from a regular series of women, supposing that he would be looking from age 18 onwards until he is (say) 40. According to the theory he should use 0.37 of this time, taking him to age 26, to judge the quality, then he should marry the next woman he fancies as much as the best of the sample.

I. R. ELLIOT

Chasely
Coffers Lane
Hatherage, Sheffield

The City's invisibles

Sir, Adrian Ham (NS 24 November) has clearly enjoyed himself in knocking the City's foreign earnings, and in selecting statistics that fit his prejudices. We were naturally delighted to see his helpful publicity for the country's invisible earnings, especially tourism, shipping, constructional engineers, solicitors and the professions generally. All are, directly or indirectly, represented on our committee and their earnings figure prominently in all our publications. But in his enthusiasm to denigrate the contribution of the City's earnings he seems to have overlooked several important points:

1. The City's *net* overseas earnings in 1977 were £1,747m. They had *doubled* in three years. These are official figures taken from page 43 of the Balance of Payments Pink Book, not mine.
2. This net surplus compares with similar net surpluses (as defined) of £1,077m. for tourism, £21m. for shipping, £618m. for constructional work overseas and with a national net surplus from private invisibles and public corporations of £4,598m.
3. In attempting to draw up a similar table of comparisons, Mr Ham has (a) used *gross* figures for most non-City activities and (b) used *net* figures for insurance, brokerage etc. Several components of the City figures are only *collected* on a net basis.
4. Although he mentions the City's earnings from portfolio and other overseas investments, his table carefully excludes them, reducing the City earning figure from £1,747m. to £1,300m. Doubtful readers are again referred to page 43 of the official Pink Book.
5. In making comparisons between the City's foreign earnings and those from manufacturing industry, he does an interesting sleight of hand by arguing that because there are few debits to set against the City's earnings, we might just as well regard them as gross figures. Well, yes, but what the figures really imply is that the City is efficient enough at its job to cut out any need for us to pay foreign financial centres for similar services. The Financial Editor of *The Guardian*, in rebutting part of Mr Ham's analysis last week put the point quite simply: 'Where financial services are different is that we import hardly any at all; so all the revenue we get from these exports is pure "profit" to the country.' In other words it is as if British Leyland were not only capable of exporting the large quantities it does, but also of satisfying the whole of home demand as well, saving huge import payments on foreign cars.
6. Mr Ham also overlooks the fact that whereas the City's activities have virtually no import content, the average import content of industry's exports is 22 per cent, individual trades varying from 7 per cent to 75 per cent. In addition financial services are paid for in cash or within a few months, whereas a high proportion of industry's exports are offered on extended credit.
7. Mr Ham stresses the small earnings of the banks. Here again definitions are important. The banks for example, have the whole of the foreign interest payments for the borrowing they do on behalf of any of their domestic customers deducted from their earnings. In these days of the Euro-dollar market, this means that if ICI or a local authority borrow overseas money through a British bank, the bank and not the real borrower has the foreign interest payments deducted from its foreign earnings. This probably halves the banks' real foreign earnings.

Our job as a Committee is to give credit (and publicity) to the earners of invisible income whether it arises from the City, tourism, shipping, civil aviation, the professions or manufacturing industry. We also see no conflict between the City and industry. The City not only earns invisible income of its own but also provides a mechanism to help manufacturers earn visible income. Industry, for its part, also earns invisible income from licensing and from direct investment overseas.

W. M. CLARKE

Committee on Invisible Exports
Stock Exchange
London EC2

Sir, Adrian Ham's article neatly juxtaposed the export earnings from overseas students and journalists (£309 millions) on the one hand and credits from banking (£293 millions) on the other. By extending the comparison further we will discover a paradox: if there is no evidence that the demand for financial services will grow faster than world economic activity the reverse would seem to be true in the case of educational interchange; yet the British Government, while continuing to give every advantage to our financial service exports, has taken every available opportunity in recent years to reduce artifically the numbers of overseas students in the UK, ostensibly on grounds of cost. Only last week the unholy alliance of the Department of

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Education and Science and the University Grants Committee gave notice of financial sanctions they will bring to bear on universities who allow numbers of overseas students to rise.

When will the Government realise that by taking the narrow and short term view this country is losing potentially valuable earnings and friends? With falling UK demand for higher education there is every reason to continue to meet a demand from overseas which we are uniquely placed to fulfil. Restrictive policies and punitive differentials in fees merely perpetuate the myth that overseas students are heavily subsidised by the UK economy, when in truth the reverse is the case.

W. H. BEALE

United Kingdom Council for Overseas Student Affairs
60 Westbourne Grove
London W2

Missing the boat

Sir, May I comment on your Note 'Labour misses the European boat again' (NS 17 November)? You quote Mr Jack Lang, organiser of a conference at Lille on 7 November of West European Socialists about the direct elections to the European Parliament, as saying about the Labour Party: 'What can you do? De Gaulle was right. It's another mentality over there. We sent out invitations but we got absolutely no response.'

I share your feeling it is a great pity the Labour Party should have been under-represented at this apparently important conference, but I would like your readers to know that I and presumably other Labour members of the European Parliament (elected by the Parliamentary Labour Party) were quite unaware of its existence. Perhaps a more careful preparation on the part of the conference organisers would have included some notice to all members of the 66-strong Socialist Group in the European Parliament.

WAYLAND KENNET

House of Lords

Curtain up

Sir, I am at present engaged on research work towards a thesis on theatre in wartime Britain, approached from the 'human interest' (for want of a better hackneyed phrase) point of view; that is to say, I am trying to get in touch with people who actually were theatregoers during the Second World War and to find out from them their sensations at the time – something mere factual accounts cannot provide. I want to find out, for instance, how it felt to be in a theatre during an air-raid, what the feelings were of those who intrepidly ventured out during the Blitz and what they went to see – and what it was that still drew them to the theatre – how theatre managements, actors and audiences coped with the pressures of war, and so on. If any readers have memories of this sort, however small, I should be more than grateful if they would write to me at the address below, and tell me about them.

VIRGINIA GLEDHILL

C/o Department of Drama and Theatre Arts
University of Birmingham
Birmingham

Americans in Westminster

Sir, Godfrey Hodgson's very good article (NS 24 November) is another forceful reminder of the fact that research assistance for MPs is ludicrously inadequate. The House of Commons library is staffed with exceptionally qualified and motivated people, but there are simply too few of them to cope with the sheer volume of work that would be required by a truly effective Parliament. The additional 150 research assistants with access to the Library are a great help, but much more is needed if Parliament is ever to become a body of highly competent, professional, full-time legislators.

It is worth reminding your readers that each member of the US House of Representatives, in addition to his salary, is allowed over $250,000 a year to employ a personal staff of up to 18 people. In the Senate there is no limit on numbers of staff and the allowance can be as much as $900,000 a year. We don't need to even approach such mind boggling excesses of bureaucracy, but we need more assistance than we now get.

Unfortunately, Godfrey Hodgson's article was unfair in some respects to the American students of EPA. While they are undergraduates, they are almost exclusively 'juniors' and 'seniors' in university, making them 20-22 years of age. They are students of Politics, Government, International Relations, Public Administration and the like, and are therefore quite conversant and well-read in general political theory. Many of them have also worked as assistants to Congressmen in Washington (one recent student had been a personal, salaried aide to Senator Abraham Ribicoff), and with competition being what it is in American universities, the students selected for this programme are of the highest academic standing. These students are highly motivated, extremely capable, enthusiastic people, some of whom will be tomorrow's leaders in American politics. Members of Parliament would be foolish to turn their backs on such a pool of talent.

BRUCE GEORGE

House of Commons
London SW1

Number games

Sir, Just one more little piece of cubic fun, connecting the contributions of Mr Playfair (NS Diary 10 November) and Mr Cleverley (Letters 17 November). Has Mr Cleverley noticed that his pair of cube sums is also one of Mr Playfair's cube differences? $15^3+9^3=16^3+2^3=18^3-12^3$. Truly, there is no limit to these frivolities. How about this: $10^3+8^3=2(9^3+3^3)$?

R. GRENFELL

Brayford
Barnstaple

Sir, It is interesting that $3^2+4^2=5^2$ and intriguing that $3^3+4^3+5^3=6^3$ and infuriating that $3^4+4^4+5^4+6^4$ does *not* equal 7^4.

T. J. BASTOW

P.O. Box 160
Clayton
Victoria, Australia

Sir, Ruth Hall and your correspondents have touched upon an ancient problem in mathematics. Diophantus of Alexandria in the third century AD seems to be the first to have recorded the fact that a number can be the sum of two cubes in two different ways. The problem was completely solved in the eighteenth century by the Swiss mathematician Ruler who gave a general parametric solution; so any numerical example is obtained by suitable numerical values of the parameters. It is interesting to note that integers exist with arbitrarily many decompositions into the sum of two positive cubes; for three such, we have

$$560^3+70^3=552^3+198^3=525^3+315^3.$$

Perhaps readers would now care to find a non-trivial example of two equal sums of fourth powers (possible!), or even the sum of three fourth power being a fourth powers, no example of which is known.

ANDREW BREMNER

Emmanuel College
Cambridge

Answers to racism

Sir, Charitable as always, I am prepared to allow that it was Paul Foot's haste to meet his deadline that caused his sloppy editing of the reported telephone conversation between himself and me. On the other hand, his homework had been rather sloppy too.

'You're not averse to using obscenities yourself, are you?' he said.

'What do you mean?' I replied.

'Good Lor'! What about that song you once wrote?'

'What song?' I asked, bewildered.

'You know the one! My word! Good Lor'! *That* song! What about the couplet about sailors' bell-bottom trousers! I suppose you call that *clean*! Good Lor'!'

I must admit that after several days I can't claim that my reportage is verbatim – but I can reveal that Mr Foot's part in the 'furious argument' between myself and him hovered somewhere between hard-line interrogation and Billy Bunter. Be that as it may, I was still somewhat in the dark.

'You know what song! *That* song! Good Lor'! *Bless 'em All*.'

It would seem apparent that Mr Foot is under the impression that I was responsible for the rude version of the well-known war-time soldiers' ditty. Alas, I was only about twelve when that particular number was being chanted in the Maginot Line. What I did write though, way back in 1958, was a play called *The Long and the Short and the Tall*. It is an anti-racist, anti-violence, anti-war piece of theatre. It is still recommended reading for schools – I would commend it too to both Mr Foot and the SKAN editing board. It successfully recreates barrack-room language and gets across its message without recourse to one foul four-letter word.

In the final analysis, Mr Foot has also edited out of his piece the crux of our argument.

'If school-children are to have to choose between SKAN and BULLDOG,' I put to him, 'we are likely to end up with kids bashing each other in the playground. Is that what you wish to see?'

There was a pause. 'If it is necessary – yes,' he said. Again, I cannot claim to quote verbatim – but Mr Foot's sentiments as expressed are true.

Mr Foot believes in violent confrontation. I choose to take a different line. Mr Peter Hain, press secretary to the Anti-Nazi League, has publicly contended: 'When you are in a big sea you have to swim with all sorts of different fish,' thus skilfully managing to associate and dissociate himself at the same time from the extremists. If we are to go in for similes, I would put it to Mr Hain that 'just because it's raining, we don't all have to take shelter under the same umbrella.' The Anti-Nazi League's large umbrella has too many queer fish sheltering under it for my personal taste – and also for the taste of others who have asked that their names be removed from the Anti-Nazi League's sponsorship roll.

WILLIS HALL

64 Clarence Road
St Albans, Herts

Sir, Paul Foot's ill-tempered piece in the London Diary (1 December) conveys the impression that anyone who resigns from the Anti-Nazi League is thereby resigning from the struggle against racism and the National Front. This is about as accurate as his statement that the notorious Olympia rally took place in 1931, when it was, in fact, in 1934.

There are many organisations, not least the Labour and trade union movement, through which opposition to all forms of racism can and must be mobilised. The Battle of Cable Street in 1936 was won not by a single anti-nazi group, but by a united front of *independent* organisations, spearheaded by Labour and left-wing activists. It is a united front of this sort, in which each organisation retains its independence but unites with others in a common cause, which offers the best and most formidable answer to racism and fascism.

TED WILLIS

House of Lords

Paul Foot replies: I don't advocate or incite violence in the playground; but if I saw a black or Jewish boy being beaten up by a gang of fascists, I hope I would go to his defence. Violently, as I say, *if necessary*. I did know – and write – that Olympia was in 1934. 1931 was put into the text by mistake.

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FIRST PERSON
Arthur Marshall

Coming Clean

One of the many hidden advantages of 'getting on' is that sufferers from either seasickness or shyness or both will find their afflictions decreasing in potency. When, fairly recently, I found myself happily tucking into roast pork and buttery carrots in the middle of an extremely disturbed Bay of Biscay (such a test for the strongest stomach), I merely blessed my advancing years and called for a further dollop of crackling. Though in my youth and since, Bovril splendidly prevented that purely physical sinking feeling, it could do nothing for one's nerves on social occasions and, when entering a room largely full of strangers, finding a hostess advancing on one with 'Now, whom don't you know?' But nowadays I wouldn't give a hoot.

Despite a robust appearance, a passion for amateur theatricals and, usually, an inanely smiling face, I was when young quite excessively shy. Going, as one frequently did in the hols, to stay with the parents of kind schoolfriends, I was continually a prey to nervous agitations. Though always temporarily reassured on arrival by a charming mother and a hearty tea (no tea was then a tea that did not provide ginger snaps and a dish of cape gooseberry jam), there were several further worries to plague one. In pre-war houses of the older sort, lavatories were few and far between and were customarily limited to a single mahogany throne next to the single bathroom. When, I used to wonder, would be the absolutely ideal moment for visiting it? Should one loudly cough on approaching it so that any possible occupant could cough right back at one and thus avoid noisy bolted-door rattlings? What if I required to go during the night? Would my schoolfriend's father, on his return from work, turn out to be grumpy or genial? Geniality was not the first thing that I associated with my own father on his return from a gruelling day in the City.

There was one hazard with which I never learned to cope. In the social circles in which we moved, there was, while staying away, only one method of being awoken to face a new day. On the very tick of 8 a.m. a trimly uniformed housemaid appeared in one's bedroom, rattled back the curtains and departed, leaving at the bedside a cup of tea and a very large and thin slice of bread-and-butter. In those days, to eat or drink the very moment I woke up made me feel sick. There was therefore no question of either sipping or munching. How, then, to dispose of this nutritional windfall? It never for one moment occurred to me to beg my hostess not to bother with such comforts. I was anyhow far too shy to do so and I somehow felt that it would be both rude and ungrateful. To fold the bread-and-butter and conceal it within a dirty handkerchief in my suitcase was easy enough, but how to get rid of the tea? I could hardly be found carrying it, loudly coughing, to the lavatory, and to tip it into the chamber-pot beneath the bed might have caused the household to suspect a severe intestinal malfunction requiring instant hospitalization. So I used to creep to the window and empty the cup onto the lawn or flower-bed beneath. Once, while doing this, a window suddenly shot open on the ground floor and the tea descended in a steaming brown cascade onto the head of the very housemaid who had brought it up. One of the risks of her profession, of course, but guilt forced me to double her tip (five shillings) and avoid her wounded gaze for the rest of my visit.

Shyness inhibited speech, and fear did much the same. Are present-day children ever shy and frightened as we often were? I very much doubt it, and a good thing too. At my prep school on the Hampshire coast, a great business was made of 'owning up' to various crimes. Only a lunatic would have owned up ahead of time, so to speak, as the misdemeanour might still go unnoticed. Hardly a week passed without the entire school being assembled in the dining-hall and somebody being asked to own up to a broken window, a cracked tooth-mug or a plate of pat-a-cakes mysteriously missing from Matron's snuggery. The headmaster in a rage was an alarming spectacle and fright, as often as not, produced in the potential criminals nothing but an uneasy silence.

We did have, however, a great boon in the shape of a matchless school-fellow called Williamson. He was, whether guilty or not, a dedicated owner-up. He felt it to be no more than his duty for, to combat the rigours of our scholastic surroundings (pretty ghastly) and the really rather depressing routines (completely deadly), he had invented for himself a dream world in which he was of royal blood, and the best blood at that. For a whole term he managed to persuade himself that he was actually the King and that George V was nothing but a very shady impostor. This, naturally, gave him a serene look. He was obviously far above such pettinesses as cracked pottery. So he took, as another, our sins upon himself. He used, for his dining-hall confessions, to take a pace forward and the royal way in which his 'It was I, headmaster' rang out was much admired. He used sportingly to take in his stride the beating which often followed (two extra strokes for the impertinence of saying 'Headmaster' instead of 'sir'). What scorn he would have had for all the modern twaddle about the 'indignity', or whatever, of this handy method of punishment. And then, with his cares of state temporarily shelved and moving freely amongst us in informal and unbuttoned mood, he could sometimes be persuaded to give us his piercing treble rendering of 'Love Will Find A Way' from the *Maid of the Mountains*, a noise which used comfortably to reach the distant staff quarters and bring the staff hurrying to protest.

What asses those who direct our lives are never, and with no risk of six of the best, to own up to their own inadequacies, mistakes and shortcomings. There is nothing so disarming as a frank confession of total failure. I would like all persons wishful to push themselves forward into public life first to be forced to sit a 'Knowledge of Human Nature' exam, those with less than 90% to be instantly expelled. So few leading politicians appear to have the very slightest idea what the average human being is *like*. The prime minister has only to come on the box and, looking apologetic for once, detail the past year's main disasters (there is, God knows, a choice) to win all hearts. 'He's human, after all' would echo from lip to lip.

But nobody will ever own up and meanwhile things go from bad to worse, which brings me by a natural transition to the Post Office. Gone for ever is the Sunday Post. Clear to all is the fact that this once great institution is now run solely for the benefit of those who man it. And now there is a fresh cause for concern. I have in the last few months been carrying out a private investigation into what happens to 9p letters posted on a Friday and either to or from London. You will find, if you do the same, that nothing very much happens to them. A large majority, in my sad experience, now stays right where it is.

I am thinking of supplying free to the Post Office for erection in all sorting offices, a large coloured poster featuring a dear old granny and a sweet little kiddy both blubbing their eyes out. Mum, away from home, you see, and visiting a sick sister has written but nothing has arrived (through the window, Postman Joe can be seen passing the gate). Beneath this touching picture are the words REMEMBER, IF YOU DELAY A LETTER YOU MAY BREAK A HEART. Who could resist such a moving reminder? It would be bound to result in a furious flurry of activity, even on a Friday.

Roger Woddis

The Impossible Dream

'I would like to have written Beethoven's symphonies.' – Mr Callaghan, in an interview in *The Observer*.

Don't get me wrong, I've no cause to complain:
Quite frankly, life's been good to me.
Although a bear with Very Little Brain,
I've clambered to the summit of the tree.

When one door closed, another opened wide;
I've really been a very lucky man,
And in a sense, been carried with the tide,
But oh! if I'd been christened Ludwig Van!

Supposing I'd composed a late quartet,
I would have been the happiest chap alive.
But symphonies – ah, there I've one regret:
If only he had not exceeded five!

I've had my chances, jobs have come and gone,
(I nearly made it to the IMF);
I'm not the great afflicted son of Bonn,
Though some backbenchers say I'm twice as deaf.

I heard the sweetest music in my ears
As Chancellor in 1964,
And proved to be the worst they'd had in years;
The trouble is, I didn't know the score.

Yes, life's a game of rummy, that I know,
And fate decides whether to 'buy' or 'twist';
If mine had been to write *Fidelio*,
Who knows? I might have been a Socialist.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Godfrey Hodgson

Paranoia Paradise

The Hoffa Wars: Teamsters, Rebels, Politicians and the Mob by DAN E. MOLDEA *Paddington Press* £5.95

According to Dan Moldea, roughly a year before President Kennedy was assassinated Federal agents sent by Robert Kennedy, then Attorney-General of the United States, briskly kidnapped the head of the Mafia in New Orleans, one Carlos Marcello, stuck him on a private plane, and flew him to Guatemala, a country of which they erroneously believed him to be a native. Marcello, understandably, was not pleased. In fact he worked himself up into a murderous rage, in the course of which he was heard to mutter the ancient Sicilian death threat, *livarsi na petra di la scarpa*: that is, 'Take the stone from my shoe!' And then he proceeded to explain that the President was to be assassinated, and that a 'nut' was to be hired to do the job. Marcello's friend, Santos Trafficante, another Don of the Honourable Society who had helped to look after gambling operations in Cuba under Batista, and who was therefore, ironically enough, invited by the CIA to join in a plot to murder Fidel Castro, also confided to friends that Kennedy was going to be 'hit'.

The juiciest morsel in Moldea's book is his thesis that John Kennedy was murdered on the orders of Jimmy Hoffa and his allies in the Mob. He produces a good deal of new evidence – new, that is, to a dilettante conspiracy buff like me – to make that thesis more plausible than it might sound. In particular, he shows, in part by means of telephone company records (not wiretaps), analysed by the Warren Commission investigators but never published, that Jack Ruby, who so conveniently disposed of Lee Harvey Oswald before he could talk, had old links with the Chicago malavita and had also been in touch, in the weeks immediately before Kennedy was killed, both with top lieutenants of Marcello and Trafficante and with killers linked to Hoffa.

The book's most serious weakness is that – having put this dramatic thesis forward, and having indeed explained a possible motive for it in general terms – Moldea never really nails it down. He does not spell out convincingly either precisely how, or precisely why, Kennedy was killed. He demonstrates the links between Ruby and the Mob, but only sketches in the faint possibility of a connection between Oswald and Marcello. He hints that another underworld soldier might have been near Oswald when the shots were fired from the Texas School Book Depository, but stops short of actually suggesting that anyone other than Oswald fired them. Above all, he doesn't even attempt to tackle the substantial negative evidence which suggests that, whatever his precise motive, Oswald was the only killer.

It is true, too, that Hoffa's friends in the underworld were facing the worst crackdown in their history from the Federal government with Robert Kennedy in the Justice Department. The heat became scorching after the informer Joseph Valachi began to sing in September 1972 – the very moment, according to Moldea, when some underworld leaders began to talk in terms of killing either the President or his brother. 'The bullet that killed John Kennedy', one expert on the Mafia has written, 'killed Robert Kennedy's dream of destroying the organised crime society.' But again it is one thing to show a motive, another to prove that a crime was committed. One of the many difficulties about the theory that Kennedy was killed by the Mob, incidentally, is the fact that the underworld has always tended to be super-patriotic. Another is that the very Mob Dons whom Moldea suspects of killing Kennedy were co-operating with the government in attempts to kill Castro.

Whether or not the Mob helped to kill Kennedy, it certainly did its best over the years to help Nixon. As far back as 1946, when Nixon was first running for Congress in California, his henchman Murray Chotiner managed to squeeze a $5,000 contribution out of a prominent local gangster called Mickey Cohen, and Cohen became a loyal Nixon supporter after that. Chotiner subsequently defended more than 200 cases on behalf of mobsters. As early as 1948, Nixon began to make friends with people in Florida – and in Cuba, which was from the point of view of gambling and organised crime its colony. As early as 1948, Nixon became friendly with Bebe Rebozo and with Tatum Wofford, whose Miami hotel was headquarters for Frank Costello and Meyer Lansky, veritable archdukes in the empire of crime. Before the Cuban revolution, Nixon was a frequent visitor to Cuba.

When the Teamsters bought a Miami bank, the key man in the negotiations was a friend of Hoffa's called Arthur Desser. In 1958, Desser bought 500 acres near Miami at Key Biscayne for $13m., $5m. of which came from the Teamster pension funds. And in 1967 Desser allowed Nixon to buy two lots there cheap. During the 1960 campaign, Hoffa helped Nixon against their common enemies, the Kennedies. According to one source, he contributed $500,000 which he in turn had been given by Marcello, the New Orleans Mafia Don. In 1968, Hoffa was in jail. His former allies, led by Frank Fitzsimmons, to whom he had entrusted his power, had become his bitter rivals. By 1971, after tortuous negotiations through Nixon's Attorney-General, John Mitchell, Hoffa was given an early release – on condition that he resign all his union offices. The Teamsters and their allies in the Mob helped Nixon in 1972. And in January 1973, when the Watergate burglars started blackmailing the White House, it was from Fitzsimmons, 'Tony Pro' Provenzano and Allen Dorfman, of the ferocious Chicago Mob, that Nixon found the million dollars he needed as hush money.

At one level, indeed, Moldea's story can be read with pleasurable *frissons* as a sort of Secret History. It chronicles a paranoid's paradise in which, sooner or later, all the shadowy men of power and legend push apart the curtains and make an entrance: H. L. Hunt, Howard Hughes, Allen Dulles. But the story has a deeper interest than that which comes from the pornography of power. The passage that stays in my mind has nothing to do with these headline names or their front-page stories. It is a sort of *fait divers* from Detroit, a few weeks before Pearl Harbor, when that city was known as the Arsenal of Democracy.

At that time the Congress of Industrial Organisations, the more radical wing of the American trade union movement, was trying to organise the Detroit truck drivers under the noses of Jimmy Hoffa's Teamsters. One of Hoffa's lieutenants in those days (he became a bitter enemy) was Rolland McMaster, euphemistically known as a Teamster 'business agent'. McMaster is six-foot-four, weighs 17 stone, and has a glass eye and 'hands as big and as firm as shovels'. This terrifying man happened to be patrolling with six other Teamster toughs when they spotted two CIO organisers cowering in a locked car. McMaster 'smashed his hand through the window, grabbed the driver by the hair, and pulled him through the window', then tossed him to his mates, who beat the wretched CIO man with baseball clubs and 'sliced him up with their knives' until he was rescued by three policemen at gun point.

It is not the sheer violence of that story that is so sickening. There is far worse violence in this book, including more than 30 murders and a torture scene in which a government informer is castrated with a blowtorch. (Hoffa himself, it seems, met his end either in a used-car compactor, in which case the Great Teamster may have been transmigrated with exquisite appropriateness into the fender on a Mack truck, or, more banally, in a sanitation shredder in Hamtramck, Michigan.) What is even more depressing is the systematic way in which anything resembling authentic trade unionism is routinely battered into submission by pseudo-trade unionists described as 'leg-breakers', 'muscle' or 'enforcers'. These goons, in turn, work for men who can see in a trade union only a monopoly of power that enables them to first despise and then sell out the men they are supposed to be representing, pillaging their pension funds and lending them to professional criminals, and in general putting the power they derive from the union at the disposal sometimes of the employers, and sometimes of organised crime.

Moldea traces the alliance between the Teamsters and organised crime to a particular strike in 1937. Hoffa, who was having an affair with an Italian girl with Mob connections, succeeded in persuading the Italian gangsters who would have been brought in to break the strike to stay neutral. The result was that the Teamsters won the strike – and the Mob moved in on the Teamsters.

This is too neat. The links between unions and organised crime had been greatly strengthened during Prohibition (which had come to an end in 1933). The Mob moved in on the drink haulage business, and then spread their tentacles to much of the over-the-road and delivery trucking industry. Significantly, Mob-union links were, and to some extent still are, strongest in Seattle, Detroit and Miami,

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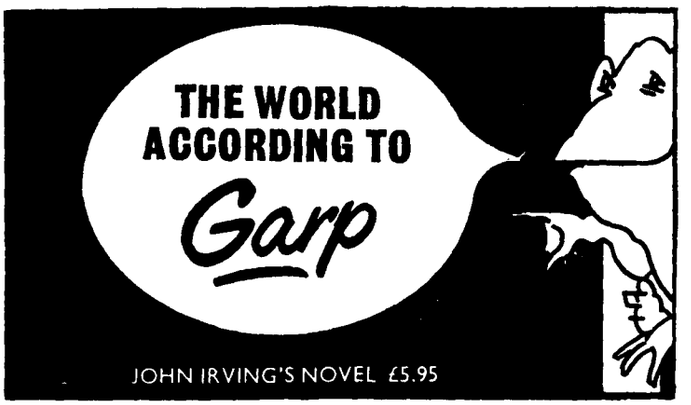

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GOLLANCZ

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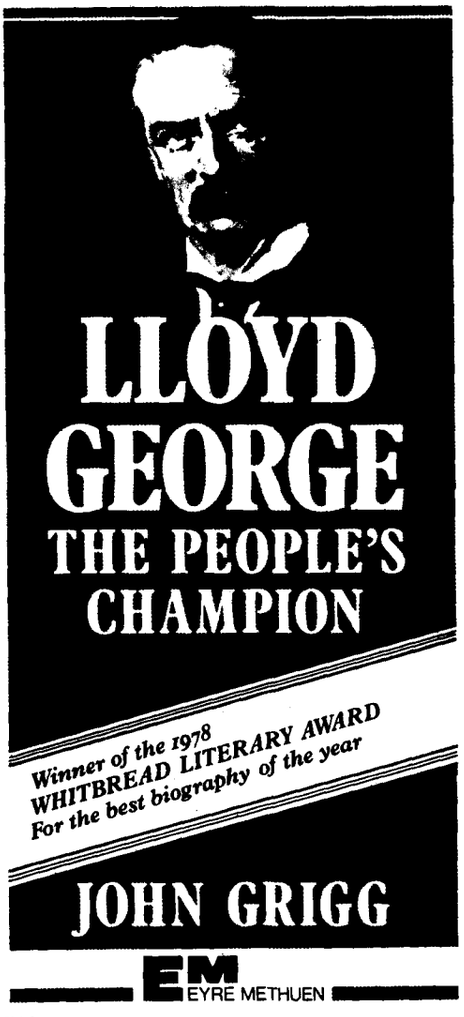
all close to points of entry for bootleg liquor during Prohibition. But the history of the corruption of American trade unionism by organised crime is more than a series of episodes in the history of crime. It is an important part of the history of trade unionism.

Much has been written about the reasons for the weakness of American trade unions and the consequent lack of class consciousness among American workers. The corruption of some (though of course by no means of all) unions must be an important contributory cause. 'I always contended that labour unions were a movement,' says Jimmy Hoffa's rival Harold Gibbons. 'Jimmy viewed them as a business.' As a business enterprise for himself and his cronies, of course. Very early on Hoffa started siphoning off union money to buy property for himself and his friends. Later he started lending millions from the members' pension fund to his friends in the Mob. But he and his like in the American trade union movement also saw the union as a business operated on behalf of each individual member: a business whose function was to wring concessions out of the management in hard cash, and whose sole justification lay in the ability to deliver hard cash to the members. That attitude was a realistic response to the attitudes of the businesses those trade union leaders had to deal with. In 1937, the same year that young Jimmy Hoffa did his Faustian deal with Santo Perrone and Angelo Meli, the goons at Republic Steel were massacring strikers there, and Walter Reuther was almost beaten to death by Ford goons at River Rouge.



'Now when you talk about hoodlums and gangsters,' said Hoffa himself on a television show once,

> the first people that hire hoodlums and gangsters are employers. If there are any illegal forces in the community, he'll use them – strongarm or otherwise. And so if you're going to stay in business of organising the unorganised, maintaining the union, then you better have a resistance.

It is the oldest and pattest of self-justifications. 'He started it first.' But in this case it may be very largely true. Violence recurs through this long and courageous book with the dull, repetitious thud of a boxer working out on the heavy bag. We should not look for its seeds in some mythic characterisation of American society. Men like Hoffa learned their violence from their betters. And they learned their lesson well.

John Creaser

Stumbling on Melons

Approaches to Marvell: The York Tercentenary Lectures edited by C. A. Patrides *Routledge & Kegan Paul* £9.95
Andrew Marvell: The Critical Heritage edited by Elizabeth Story Donno *Routledge & Kegan Paul* £8.95
Andrew Marvell: His Life and Writings by JOHN DIXON HUNT *Elek* £8.95

The commemoration of the tercentenary of Andrew Marvell's death in 1678 might tempt us into self-congratulation. The reputation of this most subtle and sophisticated of poets has never been higher, and the York lectures are a more worthy tribute than would have been within the scope of past generations. They are so incomparably superior to the ancestors reprinted in the 'Critical Heritage' volume (which ends at the tercentenary of Marvell's birth) that the study of literature for once seems a progressive form of knowledge, as, in T. S. Eliot's phrase, 'the common pursuit of true judgment'.

But these three books also remind us that, like the poor, poor readers are always with us, so that criticism stands still even as it advances. Modern appreciation of Marvell is deeply indebted to Eliot's classic essays, which conclude the 'Critical Heritage' selection and, for the general reader at least, make the rest of the book superfluous. Their vital influence is perceptible throughout what is best in the York volume. Yet John Dixon Hunt writes as if they had never been written, and Elizabeth Story Donno is unable to distinguish them from their antediluvian ancestors.

Hunt's account of the life and writings is almost touching in its innocence of critical discipline and in the elasticity of its sense of relevance. It contains not a single critical *aperçu* worth thought, and is a classic of the 'might have/must have' school of biography. Hunt devotes pages to Italian gardens Marvell does not mention, while ignoring the Spanish gardens he does. Most of the 66 charming plates are as irrelevant as is much of the text. A presumably unconscious hostility towards Marvell the man emerges gratuitously here and there (three times on p. 133 alone), but otherwise the book is a pleasure to handle and look at. There is, however, no real point in reading it, and anyone who requires a full-length biography of a man of whom we know little that is both certain and revealing should still turn to Pierre Legouis, who is only slightly out of date.

Elizabeth Donno's volume is a serious and competent work of scholarship, and it is not her fault if the book reveals so tediously how the 'Critical Heritage' can be a pre-critical heritage. The story of Marvell's reputation is intriguing and her introduction outlines it well, but the book demonstrates that virtually no Marvell criticism of intrinsic worth preceded Eliot. Writer after writer tut-tuts over Marvell's cleverness, but sentimentally celebrates him for tenderness and for a love of nature as it really is (praise which necessitates many trips to that beautiful but quite untypical 'hatching throstle'). It is true that Eliot's integration of this dissociated image was occasionally anticipated, notably in Lamb's famous but solitary phrase 'witty delicacy' and in an impressive few sentences from James Russell Lowell. But reading Eliot in such company makes me give thanks again for the radically new voice he brought to criticism.

So it is the more queer that Donno accuses Eliot of what she calls 'the plagiarism of received ideas', that is, of merely bringing together at an opportune time opinions that had long been current. She forgets that, despite those fleeting anticipations in a few authors, and despite an emerging intuition in the early years of the century of a Marvell who resembles Eliot's and ours, Eliot was writing against the mainstream of opinion. For example, the piece by Cyril Falls which precedes Eliot's in her selection repeats the old sentimentalities. Moreover, much in Eliot's epoch-making essays is original, on any understanding of the term. There is, for example, his relation of Marvell to a European tradition of 'intense levity', or the magnificent passage in which he distinguishes wit from cynicism and erudition. Furthermore, if Eliot borrows, he borrows so selectively and discriminatingly that such borrowing is an act of redemption and creation. Like the poet, the good critic is always 'forming new wholes'. Finally, if Eliot borrows, he transfigures. Donno asserts that Eliot's account of wit as 'a tough reasonableness beneath the slight lyric grace' comes from George L. Craik's 'the union of grace and force'. But Craik's phrase is the kind of useful outline which might occur to any reviewer, while Eliot's is an attempt to register exactly the quality of its subject. Whether or not one ultimately finds it accurate, one's sense of Marvellian wit is more adequate as a result of pondering on the suppleness of mind re-created by Eliot. Donno's work is, then, a service to scholarship but a disservice to criticism, and it is wretched that this old dichotomy should have to be revived.

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In the York Tercentenary Lectures, however, that old ghost is laid. As a study of Marvell, the book is a mess. Contradictions abound; two lecturers casually dismiss the kind of 'fallen' reading of 'Bermudas' which Philip Brockbank labours effectively to establish. 'On a Drop of Dew' attracts repeated attention, while major poems are merely mentioned in passing. There is no introduction or afterword to give the inexperienced reader a sense of perspective. Nevertheless, although some of the 15 essays are merely worthy and dull, this is often an exhilarating volume, with some fresh work on a poet who has suffered unduly from that solemn ingenuity and that de-coding of arcane trivialities which too often pass for reading in the academies.

Christopher Hill, for example, writes enticingly on Marvell's association with Milton and other radicals of the time. The biography of Marvell's middle and later years ought never to be the same again. A. J. Smith makes a case for seeing Marvell as a 'metaphysical' poet in every sense. Louis Martz finds tantalising affinities between Marvell, Herrick, and Mannerist art. Frank Warnke reads the meadow sequence of *Upon Appleton House* via Mircea Eliade in a way which does illuminate that passage's mysteriousness, and John Dixon Hunt's outline of the gardenist background is, through its generality, altogether more useful than the comparable material in his biography.

These, and others, will encourage exploration. But the most brilliant criticism comes from Christopher Ricks and John Carey, stimulated in part, I imagine, by Robert Ellrodt's *Les poètes métaphysiques anglais* (a book which really ought to be available in English). Ellrodt's own York lecture is a rather *déjà-vu* restatement and defence of some of his earlier perceptions; but his central contention, though under-stated, is the keynote of the new book's finest criticism: 'To trace individual modes of apprehension may be more rewarding than to search for borrowed concepts.'

Ricks for his part sharply illuminates Marvell's varied and ubiquitous use of the self-inwoven simile or reflexive image, where something *is* its own resemblance (the drop of dew 'like its own tear'; the river drowned in itself). It is, he demonstrates, a figure which enables us to conceive the apparently inconceivable and visualise the unvisualisable. It is at once two and one, analytic and synthetic, simultaneously recognising opposition and conceiving union, and Ricks is able, most strikingly, to demonstrate its similar pervasiveness in other poetry of civil war and self-conflict, that of the Ulster poets.

The mode of apprehension examined by Carey is the 'potent feeling of constriction', the awareness of reality as confining, or as a trap, that he finds everywhere in Marvell. Even love becomes, by definition, a de-finition, a confinement, while actions are continually turning against themselves. I suspect that Carey, unlike Ricks, underestimates Marvell's resilience – even if his sense of freedom is sometimes merely the recognition of necessity, Marvell seems to find infinite space in a nutshell. Nevertheless, each of Carey's examples goads the reader into a more alert response to the poetry.

Such criticism is coarsened by abrupt summary, for while the prose of Carey and Ricks rarely attempts Eliot's appropriate delicacy of nuance, it has, in its agile lucidity, that sugges-

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tiveness through 'bright, hard precision' which Eliot found in Marvell. When Carey, for example, says of the ending of 'An Horatian Ode' that 'force does not establish power; it establishes, simply, the need to use force', his comment has a desolating clarity worthy of the passage.

Reading these essays and then re-reading 'The Garden', a poem of chosen confinement, and a reflexive poem where the mind's happiness is the mind, I found a varnish of habit cleaned away and dim perceptions clarified. For example, whatever dictionary meaning one gives to 'a green thought' (fresh, youthful, etc), it becomes clear that the mind is above all responding to the 'green shade' of the garden. So the all-annihilating, all-transcending, all-creating mind is still limited by, because reflecting, its congenial setting. That rueful and exact implied qualification is quintessential Marvell. Or in this reflexive image, 'The nectarene, and curious peach, / Into my hands themselves do reach', the formality of the verb is oddly telling, especially after the luscious vine has crushed its clusters on the mouth. The fruits 'reach themselves' – there is a complete abandonment of the self; but the verb suggests a courteous readiness to oblige, as of a waiter (especially as 'attentive' and 'solicitous' are meanings of 'curious' at this time). The touch adds a trifle to that fastidiousness in rapture and that reserve in abandonment which are so Marvellian.

Finally, even 'Fair trees! wheres'e'er your barks I wound, / No name shall but your own be found' takes on some of what Ricks finely calls Marvell's 'luminosity of pathos'. Under the couplet's dotty charm – like the vertiginous redundancy of a notice simply saying 'Do not deface this notice' – there is an echo, as in 'Little T.C.', of unfallen Adam naming the creatures in paradise. But in 'The Garden', naming is wounding. Man is distinguished from nature in the act of celebrating it, so that the trees, wounded by their names, become comic figures of man, lacerated (though ennobled) by his self-consciousness, split because able to imagine himself whole. Marvell's panache anticipates the passionate ruefulness of Yeats, who knows the beauty of the chestnut-tree, that 'great-rooted blossomer', through lacking its unselfconscious unity, and through his fallen ability to dissect it into leaf, blossom, and bole.

Geoffrey Robertson

Pardoners' Tales

Sexism and the Law by ALBIE SACHS and JOAN HOFF WILSON *Martin Robertson* £8.95 and £3.95

A Law Unto Myself by SIR NEVILLE FAULKS *William Kimber* £5.95

Forty Years of Murder by KEITH SIMPSON *Harrap* £6.95

The Queen's Pardon by C. H. ROLPH *Cassell* £5

This legal grab-bag offers Christmas comfort for the convicted, jokes from a judge, and enough details of murder trials to see the most desperate addict through the Minehead recess. It also includes one work of considerable novelty and importance: an account by Sachs and Wilson of how male judges in England and America have consistently manipulated the language of the law to obstruct women's rights. Had Parliament ever enacted a season of 'goodwill to all men', it seems that judges would have construed its words to deny any place in the festivity to women.

Female emancipation might have been achieved in the last century if the courts had been prepared to give a fair and rational interpretation to the statutes which afforded 'persons' access to the universities, the professions and the vote. Instead, the judges decreed that 'person' referred only to males and to corporations: it excluded dogs, lunatics and women. The great men of 19th-century jurisprudence – Stephen, Coleridge and Dicey among them – argued that womankind was by nature too refined, pure and delicate to soil its collective hands with ballot or examination papers, despite the fact that millions of this hypersensitive species were at work in factories and domestic service. The 'myth of female refinement' was devised by judges to justify decisions that were really designed to perpetuate a social order in which unskilled wives were at one class level a measure of male prestige and adornment, and at another a pool of cheap and replaceable labour. Sachs and Wilson's account of how judicial bias against women is always dressed up in the bogus rhetoric of chivalry is particularly welcome at a time when that claim is increasingly invoked in the courts to defeat the operation of the Sex Discrimination Act: the judgment in the case of *Women v. El Vino's* has ample historical precedent.

Chivalry, for all its usefulness to lawyers wishing to deny equal opportunity, has not been much extended by the legal profession in welcoming women into its ranks. The final chapters of *Sexism and the Law* examine the problems of those women who have courageously trespassed into male robing rooms. At this point the book's analysis deteriorates, as the authors fall into their own trap of endorsing a silly sexual stereotype. They suggest that 'pomposity, complacency, desiccation and lack of contact with the real world' are characteristic, not of lawyers generally, but only of *male* lawyers. Would these qualities really disappear if the profession increased its intake of recruits like the young Margaret Thatcher? They note with facile approval that one third of the lay magistracy is female, yet these 'ladies bountiful' who mete and dole harsh penalties to the working class are appointed precisely because they conform to the 'myth of female refinement' which is still applied by the Lord Chancellor's department as a prerequisite for appointing women to the lay bench. We do not need more 'women' in the administration of the law, we need more 'persons' – in the sense, please, of 'individuals' prepared to strain mercy with justice. Otherwise, openings for Portia may merely license the practice of Turandot.

Sachs and Wilson are academics who find sexism in the reported cases, but Sir Neville Faulks writes as a former judge who found it in a judicial practice. He was appalled to discover, on his appointment in 1963, that his wife had no right to accompany him on circuit: visiting judges, like visiting cricket teams, were allowed no distractions. Judges' lodgings were run on the principles of an officers' mess. As his more experienced brethren – who recoiled at the idea of 'talkative wives, and those who poked their noses into the kitchen' – patiently explained to him, 'the rule had been in existence for too long to admit of change'. Women, Sir Neville concluded, 'are expected to be seen and not heard', although by 1975 he can patronisingly relate that 'in the family Division . . . we have two very good female judges and I trust we present a very avant garde profile to the general public'.

For the most part, Sir Neville writes with an engaging humility. No country in the world is quite so mysteriously cavalier about its judicial appointments, and he confesses to some bewilderment about his own. He was summoned by the Lord Chancellor, and told, 'You'll be a mug if you don't take it.' He was instructed to wear a dinner jacket every night in the lodgings, and not to get drunk. Armed with these few 'Polonius-like precepts', he was deemed worthy to decide the liberty of the subject. No doubt his reminiscences will be combed for evidence of judicial bias, and there are some rather silly examples of conservative double-talk. He is delighted to report Sam Silkin in action against the Unions, but he initially doubted the wisdom of Sir Morris Finer's appointment to the Royal Commission on the Press, for no better reason

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than that 'in the past he held left-wing views and is still closely associated with the LSE'.

Keith Simpson's autobiography offers a quick flip through the crowded casebook of a long-serving Crown pathologist. The view from the mortuary is actually a good deal more panoramic than the view from the judges' lodgings, and Simpson admits some honest doubts about the competence of professional colleagues. Forensic medicine has a tendency to produce prima donnas, like Sir Bernard Spilsbury, enthusiastically committed to dubious findings, but with reputations which the finest advocate cannot tarnish. Professor Simpson places great store by clinical detachment, and his book will help to debunk the Spilsbury legend as well as recording in popular form some of his own distinguished contributions to the science of detection. There are times, however, when even this cool technician becomes carried away by the excitement of the legal game, as he delights in 'hard duels with lawyers, pompous old judges and obtuse juries' who dare to doubt the infallibility of his medical expertise. The ease with which a professional can mislead a court – and there are quite a few examples in the early pages of *Forty Years of Murder* – makes the book serve as a special warning to those who want murder trials to end, as well as begin, with a body in question.

Finally, a ray of hope for the victims of over-confident experts, pompous lawyers, biased judges and obtuse juries. C. H. Rolph has discovered that somewhere in Whitehall there exists a 'Prerogatives Office', staffed by a group of latter-day pardoners who beaver away on trial transcripts in search of miscarriages of justice. Macheath in the death house and Nixon outside the White House are notorious recipients of the Sovereign power to cancel a debt to society before the first instalment has been paid, although most modern beneficiaries of the sovereign's 'Grace and Mercy' are motoring offenders whose convictions cannot stand after a re-interpretation of the law. The courts, of course, have been hostile to this royal vote of no-confidence, and it is still unclear whether a pardon expunges all guilt or (as the word implies) reaffirms the conviction yet cancels the consequences. But the main problem is to excite the Pardoners' interest in the first place. There is no particular procedure, although a book by Ludovic Kennedy or a noisy and influential 'defence committee' seems to work. For less fortunate victims of injustice, Rolph is surely right to insist on easier and more public access to the Prerogatives Office by placing it under the control of the Ombudsman, and an opportunity to challenge unreasonable failure to investigate by an extension of habeas corpus. To err is human, even when contemplating forgiveness.

This English

Four corking near-homophones to begin with. Who writes the *Telegraph* headlines? Who writes the *Guardian* leaders? We finish with an engaging dangler. £3 for the first entry, £2 for the others printed.

☐ The cathedral close remains outside the purloins of the conservation area . . . *Guardian Weekly* (Tim Leonard)

☐ 'Mr President, I really don't understand what is going on,' was the Ottawa delegate's plaintiff appeal. **Ian Murray** *Scotsman* (C. I. Affleck)

☐ Guyana Sect Death Role May Top 800 **Headline** *Daily Telegraph* (Clive Deardon)

☐ The Government is under no obligation to place large contracts in the way of companies which . . . choose to flaunt guidelines . . . **Leader** *Guardian* (Paul Tinnion)

☐ Strapped to her legs, the customs officers found 2lb of heroin. **Nine O'Clock News** *BBC-1* (R. Markham)

Blake Morrison

All For Love

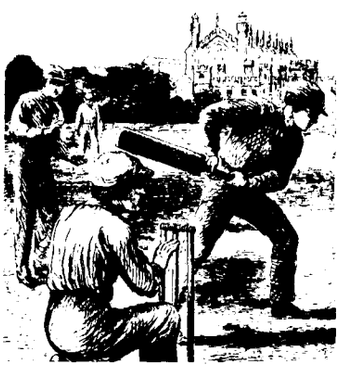
In Dreams Begin Responsibilities by DELMORE SCHWARTZ *Secker & Warburg* £4.90
Love is for Lovers edited by David Valentine *William Kimber* £4.25
Lovers Are Not People by TIMERI MURARI *Methuen* £4.50

The myth of wasted talent is with us once again. In recent months we've been reminded of the tragic cases of Ivor Gurney and Dylan Thomas. Now, with the publication of *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities*, we're invited to consider Delmore Schwartz, a writer who by the age of 30 feared that he'd burnt himself out. Schwartz's distinguished friends have tended to support this verdict. In the work of Lowell, Bellow and Berryman, he appears as the brilliant talent who quickly succumbed to the enemies of promise: drink, egomania, paranoia, madness. The legend is well established. The poet has 'become his admirers' to the extent that we no longer know whether there's anything in the work to admire. As Irving Howe points out in his foreword to this collection of short stories, such is the glamour of the legend there's a danger that what Schwartz actually wrote will be 'brushed aside'. Or if he is read, it will be in the wrong spirit: we'll be looking less for what Schwartz did than for what he didn't.

In Dreams Begin Responsibilities should be an opportunity to stop the autobiographical chit-chat and to look at the best of Schwartz's fiction. But its immediate impact may be to throw still further attention on the life. James Atlas's introduction, largely lifted from his excellent biography, shows how many of these stories fulfilled some therapeutic function: they allowed Schwartz to sort out private preoccupations or to settle old scores (Schwartz himself has spoken of his fiction as 'a way of working off anxiety'). 'The World Is a Wedding' indicts Paul Goodman and his sycophantic circle; 'New Year's Eve' satirises Philip Rahv, Mary McCarthy and the *Partisan Review* set; 'The Child Is the Meaning of This Life' explores the background to Schwartz's own childhood; 'America! America!' draws on stories told by his mother. Throughout these pieces Schwartz himself appears in various precious and precocious guises, notably as a young writer called Shenandoah Fish.

What's left, once the autobiography has been set aside, isn't very much: the dream-like but not especially responsible 'The Track Meet'; the manic 'Commencement Day Address', which fills out as narrative material to be found in Schwartz's poem 'In the Naked Bed, In Plato's Cave'; the recently discovered 'SCREENO', in which the poet-narrator suffers various humiliations (a common experience in these stories) after winning a lottery at the cinema. Too many of the stories read as miniatures of Schwartz's career: beginning with great flair and assurance, they meander, falter, fizzle out. But we do have his one masterpiece, the collection's title story, in which the narrator sees his parents' courtship as if it were taking place on a movie screen: he's a member of the audience forced to watch the making of a marriage which he knows will lead to 'remorse, hatred, scandal, and two children whose characters are monstrous'. Schwartz moves skilfully between the events on the screen and the narrator's reactions. His hero worries, weeps, cries out, is finally ejected 'into the cold light' of consciousness: meanwhile, the reel winds on. Here is one Schwartz story in which all the details count: even a passing allusion to the sea beside which the courting parents walk – waves poised at the 'intolerable' moment before they break – has its part in the poignant design.

David Valentine's *Love is for Lovers* must be the soppiest-looking book of the season, a collection to take under the mistletoe. The title, the cover, the blush-making introduction ('Love is indeed a many-splendoured thing'), even the name of the editor (was it made up specially for the occasion?): after all this, most readers will be expecting a glut of girl-meets-boy romances. Happily, such expectations are



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defeated: this is a fine collection precisely because the limits suggested by its subtitle, 'An Anthology of Love Stories', haven't been too rigidly imposed. Indeed, some of the stories seem scarcely to be about love at all. The chief distinction of Malcolm Bradbury's 'Who Do You Think You Are?', for example, is not that it at one point shows two people in bed, but that it sends up social scientists, psychobabblers and media men in flowered shirts.

Most of the stories that could be said to be about love take a pretty disenchanted view of it. A middle-aged bachelor looks all set to marry a lovely widow but decides that anathema in his bedsit is preferable to creature-comforts with her (Mary Lavin's title story); 'two gentle people' meet on a park bench, spend an intimate day together, but return at night to their empty marriages (Graham Greene); a divorcee shacks up with an abandoned wife, lives happily, then comes home one day to find that she's gone back to hubbie (Alan Sillitoe); two people on holiday decide to have an affair, but she's suffering from sunburn and he's got gout, so that 'flesh' prevents what 'flesh' wants to perform (Elizabeth Taylor); Henry and Sarah get married, then find they can't have children, so he runs off with a girl, who gets pregnant, but by this time he's bored with her, of course, and . . . (Jean Stubbs). Compelling reading, and not without lighter moments; but it may be safer to send a partridge in a pear tree.

Further meditation on love is to be found in Timeri Murari's new novel, which takes the view that *Lovers Are Not People*; certainly Murari's aren't. His narrator-heroine Shelley Warwick is a male-fantasy version of 1970s woman: sexy, liberated, not afraid to go round saying things like, 'I know everything there is to know about fucking. David taught me well.' 'Taught' is the give-away: far from being a randy quester, Shelley is fanatically subservient to her husband David, a stereotype of the 1950s go-getter: a working class lad who has married upward and zoomed to the top. After 18 years' marriage, David has upped and offed with a woman from New York; Shelley reacts in an old-style way: 'Oh god, how I missed David. His arms felt different, strong and secure, and when he moved in the night, I felt comforted.' The novel quickly becomes what the blurb calls 'a detective story of the heart': will Shelley get her man? Or will she be defeated by the Other Woman and by the distracting attentions of a re-encountered Old Flame? To find the answer you have to get through passages which read as if Mickey Spillane has been commissioned to write for *True Romance*: the novel affects straight-talking toughness but is hopelessly soft-centred. Nevertheless, Murari's ferocious pace will probably take most readers through.

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The Rev. A. M. Dutton is a Staffordshire man born 1910, entered St. Aidan's College, Birkenhead and was ordained by the Bishop of Sheffield in 1939. He has served in several country parishes. He was editor of "The Leicester Diocesan Leaflet" in 1947. He became Headmaster of St. Chad's School, Wellington, Shropshire.

Mr Dutton retired through heart trouble in 1963 and since then has been writer, broadcaster and author of several books. He lives now quietly in the country. His main interests are astronomy, archaeology and music.

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Christopher Hitchens

First Base

The Cyprus Revolt by NANCY CRAWSHAW *Allen & Unwin* £12.50

The Cypriots seem to manufacture more history than they can consume locally. It has been said that they have made up for not being a world power by opting to become a world nuisance, and no less a man than Dr Henry Kissinger once unsmilingly observed that Makarios was 'too big a man for so small an island'. That island, and its people, have certainly exerted a considerable influence, not just on Britain and the imagination of Britons like Durrell, but on Greece, Turkey and the Middle East. And, despite the lack of a martial tradition, Cypriots have been able to check and harass larger forces than their own when forced to do so. Nancy Crawshaw is here making a good claim to be the historian of the recent phase of their struggle.

Her book is certainly meticulous. It's obvious, however, that she has a highly conventional cast of mind: she uses words like 'subversive' and 'extremist' as if they were technical, and her reverence for UN debates and minutiae is second to none. But for those who do not think (like James Morris) that the end of Empire was an orderly and decorous business, here is the record shining through the official reports. Brutality (torture, actually), ineptitude, carelessness about indigenous feeling: all the old gang are here, if somewhat muted and occasionally excused by 'context'.

It is extraordinary, as Nancy Crawshaw points out, that the early British administration, with its classical education somewhere under its belt, had no difficulty in understanding Hellenic aspirations among Cypriots (Churchill's famous pro-*Enosis* speech recurs throughout the book), whereas later colonial governments, faced with a demonstration of the power of this idea in practice, refused to acknowledge it as genuine at all. When Richard Crossman pointed out that communist exploitation of the *Enosis* movement proved that it was authentically popular, the Tories gaped at the logic. When Bevan asked whether the government wanted a base in Cyprus or Cyprus as a base, the Front Bench was confounded. Who cared what the inhabitants thought? The road back from the Palestine Mandate, Port Said and the Baghdad Pact ran through Nicosia on its bloody way home, to the benefit of nobody.

Ms Crawshaw's is a diplomatic and political history, which takes little account of social and ideological matters. She believes that, in their desire for *Enosis*, the Greek Cypriots brought catastrophe on themselves and are the authors of their own difficulties and disasters. This makes her a model citizen in a world where superpowers and their proxies like to blame insubordinate minorities for everything. In fact, as her closing chapters fail to make plain (or even consider), it was the Cypriots' desire for *independence* which got them into trouble. It was as a result of their stubbornness on that point that they were attacked and betrayed by Greece, invaded by Turkey, subverted by America and abandoned by Britain. If they had submitted to emasculation by Athens (with a few shreds tossed to Ankara) they could have acquired peacefully what has now been thrust on them by force. Ms Crawshaw's patronising tone would be less objectionable if she dealt with the ample evidence of the last four years about the Kissinger strategy and its auxiliaries, but her scholarship seems to desert her when the original argument of the book is in question.

Still, in her characterisation of EOKA and Grivas, and the dangerous myth which they promulgated against British oppression, she does establish where the flaws in the dominant Greek Cypriot mentality really lie.

This is especially true in the blindness of many of them to Turkish feelings (and Turkish strength). Makarios once said in my presence that his worst mistake had been to allow mainland Greek troops on to the island, thus conceding too much to his future enemies. But the relation between hubris and nemesis is not as direct as Ms Crawshaw makes out. She seems to think that the 1974 invasion brought Cyprus into overdue contact with 20th century reality, whereas what it has done is to restore international principles of conduct which we hoped even the 19th century had left behind.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Peter Conrad

Dancing Bare

The Bartered Bride *Metropolitan Opera, New York*
Carmen *Metropolitan Opera, New York*

Smetana's *Bartered Bride* is a festive comedy, and at the Met it has been festively treated. The company's new production is a marvel, inventive, exhilarating, both jovial and sad. The opera is about a holiday – a spring feast in a Bohemian village, with dances of courtship, sessions of boozing, and an itinerant circus – and the singers with whom the Met has affluently cast it are themselves on holiday from more usual tragic assignments. Thanks to them, the production discovers tragic despair behind the comic uproar, and in doing so it magnifies the work.

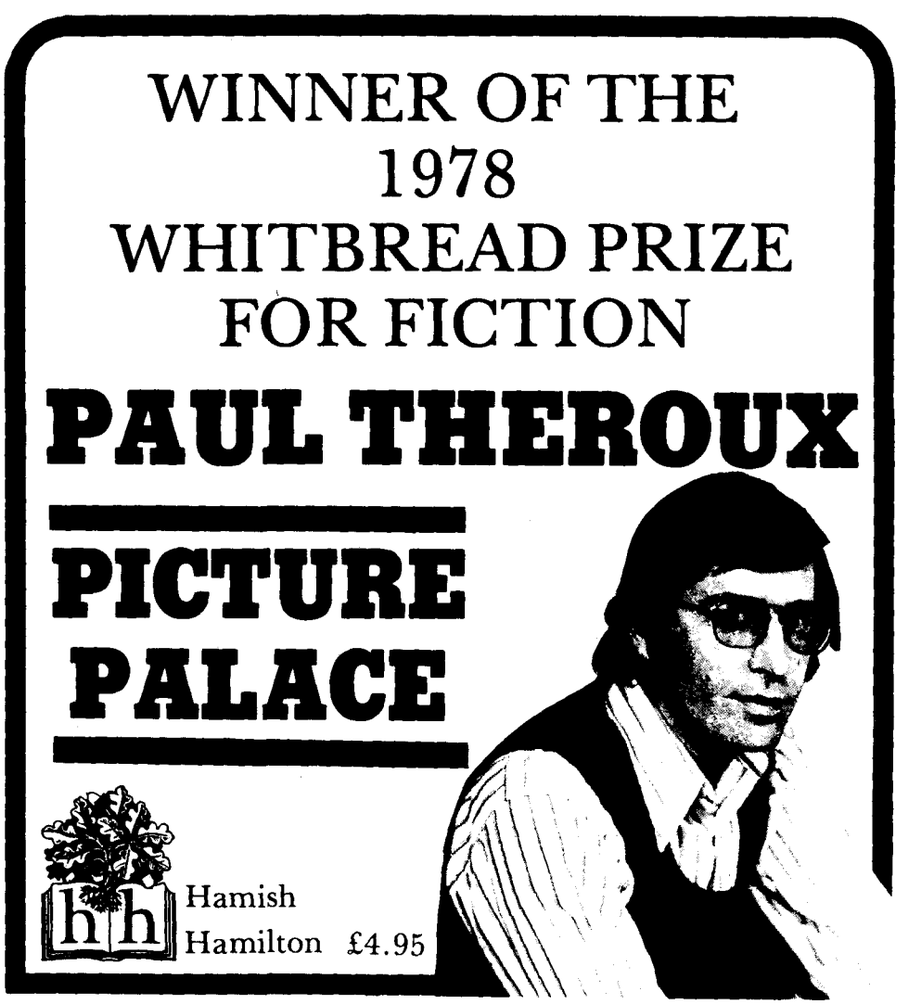
The characterisations are anthological. The singers quote from tragedy inside the comedy by allying Smetana's rustics with other operatic roles. Teresa Stratas plays the bartered Marenka as a pale, distraught Mélisande, an elderly child immured in doubt and afraid to be happy. Her lover Jenik in Nicolai Gedda's impersonation becomes a hapless, shabby-genteel courtier, a relative of Gedda's Lensky in *Onegin* or his Gustavus from *Un ballo in maschera*, at a loss in coarse rural society. Martti Talvela as the marriage-broker Kecal is not a cynical pandar but a communal totem-pole, festooned with decorations and brandishing an encyclopedic volume of laws, a secular colleague of those figures of spiritual paternity Talvela enacts so well – Pimen in *Boris Godunov*, Gurnemanz in *Parsifal*, Padre Guardiano in *La forza del destino*. The singers subtly tightrope-walk between the genres. Comedy falters into tragedy, or tragedy allows itself to be buffeted into comedy. The moody, demoralised Stratas shrugs off her anguish and gets on with the housework, gathering eggs or disposing of kitchen slops behind the proscenium. The debonair Gedda erects a ladder and swigs beer from a tankard. Talvela cavernously rattles off slangy patter songs.

The most audacious of these tragi-comic performances is that of Jon Vickers as Vasek. During rehearsals, Vickers vowed to make the audience weep for this stuttering booby. He does so by dangerous self-parody. The character's speech impediment obstructs Vickers's vocal eloquence. The awesome voice is cramped by the prevarications of Vasek's stammer. Vickers refuses to use this handicap as an excuse for making Vasek pitiably funny. Instead it is the motive for a fierce, introverted intensity. Emotions Vasek can't utter redouble their force as they turn ingrown. Vickers gasps for breath, bobs his head in a fury of inarticulate over-emphasis, bites his nails, or shreds one of the yellow ribbons with which he has been bedecked for his wedding. When the voice is briefly released, it rings out with startling vehemence, only to be at once withdrawn in panic and embarrassment. Like Stratas as Marenka, Vickers has managed a comic representation of tragic neurosis. Vasek alternates between snarling defiance of his parents and cowering repentance, between manic elation and miserable depression.

It is a bravely excessive performance. All Vickers's emotions are outsize, and the self-parody he risks is dramatic as well as vocal. He aggrandises Vasek by finding in him affinities with the characters of his tragic repertory. Folly sanctifies Vasek. Turning his incompetence into holy innocence, Vickers makes him a comic correlative of Parsifal. When Vasek sheepishly lusts after Esmerelda or recoils in shame from Marenka, Vickers endows him with the reluctant, self-mortifying eroticism of his Tristan. Bent-backed as he turns the circus merry-go-round, Vickers mimics his own Samson. Vasek's companions are a trio of little boys. Romping with them, Vickers is atoning for the cruelty of his apprenticeship-bashing Peter Grimes.

Vickers himself paradoxically combines might and fragility. The voice is of terrifying power, but he delights in controverting it, scaling it down to an elegiac whisper. The dynamic alteration reduces the raging man to a nervous, dreamy child. *The Bartered Bride* allows him to sing and act along this border between tragic magniloquence and comic vulnerability. Vasek is recruited by the circus to play a dancing bear. Once inside the bear-skin, he runs amok. A louring grizzly darkens the cyclorama but, diminishing as it advances, turns out to be an animated, amiable teddy-bear, which removes its head to disclose a beaming Vasek. This transformation from ogre to infant is an image of Vickers's own alarming, endearing theatrical genius. He is at once indomitable and easily wounded; he both frightens us and entreats us to pity him; the voice simultaneously menaces and implores. Vasek's departure encapsulates the contradiction. He takes advantage of the bear costume to snarl at his fussing mother, then reverts to the other extreme and skips off with inane, infectious puerility.

The festivity in *The Bartered Bride* solemnises an accord in society as well as celebrating an individual union in marriage. For comedy, the fate worse than death is exclusion from the community. Hence Kecal's anxiety to get everyone married, because the matches he negotiates are the incorporation of lonely, otiose individuals into society. Jenik temporarily suffers the tragic fate of outlawry, when he is driven from the village as a Moravian intruder. Vasek's career proceeds in the opposite direction. He begins as a deviant oaf, one of those tragic aliens in whom Vickers specialises. But comedy allows him to shuffle off the fidgeting, incapable character with which he is afflicted and acquire a more resilient replacement. As the circus-barker promises, the bear-skin is camouflage: 'furry friendly features cover over yours'. Vasek



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misunderstands, and says he 'won't dance bare'. But the circus offers concealment not self-exposure, and in his disguise Vasek the tragic non-entity becomes a comic celebrity.

The relation between enfeebled individuals and the comforting community is dramatised in the alternation between song and dance. In each of the acts, the operatic intrigue is interrupted by tribal dances, brilliantly choreographed at the Met by Pavel Smok. Individual problems are absorbed into and pacified by communal rites: in the first act a copulatory polka, in the second a furiant of male aggression, in the third an exhibition of polymorphous elasticity by the circus folk, professional self-transmogrifiers. On the Met's draughty *hangar of a stage*, Josef Svoboda's bare blue sky-cloth is both the production's minimal set and its presiding metaphor. The cyclorama is the semi-transparent barrier behind which the community eavesdrops in silhouette, and the sky from which the dancers, filing on through slits in the base, suddenly materialise, as if from mid-air. Later it doubles as the circus-tent, the flimsy shell of artificiality. Inside its encompassing, protective circle are other circles, images of the self-regenerating continuity of the comic world: the mill-wheel on which Marenka spins Vasek, the carousel Vasek labours to turn. Even the snaky, ingenious revolutions of the Met stage, disassembling a farmyard or sliding a tavern of roisterers into the distance, mechanically demonstrate the circularity of comedy, which rescues the characters of *The Bartered Bride* from their uncertainties and returns them to the happiness they have forfeited.

During November, the Met also had an incongruous pair of Carmens, Elena Obraztsova and Régine Crespin. Obraztsova's Carmen is a Tartar vamp, barbaric and brutal. Wielded by her, the castanets threaten to become instruments of torture. Interpretatively, she seems to have made a close study of the octoroon ladies who importune passers-by on Eighth Avenue. Hands planted on hips, she writhes and squirms in simulated abandon. Her sexuality, however, is largely dental. Her grins are mean and menacing. Standing still to be applauded, she gnaws and gnashes as if intent on biting the Met audience to death. Her mouth stretches itself into an icy, glittering smile. The voice which issues from behind this enamelled portcullis of molars is harshly vibrant and savage, more used to commandeering than to seducing.

Crespin, following her, has none of this chomping omnivorousness. Her voice is silvery, not brazen like Obraztsova's, and her Carmen is not a gipsy wanton but a corseted courtesan, as archly sophisticated as the Marschallin. Crespin's presence turns the tavern from a bordello into a salon. She has a French professionalism about sex, auditioning the candidates for her affections with choosy sensual connoisseurship. She cruises José because he has the temerity to ignore her, and manipulates him with the cunning of an older, more experienced woman. The difference between these Carmens is as apparent in their footwork as in their singing. Obraztsova bares legs as well as teeth, and employs her naked foot to simulate the polish on Zuniga's military boot. Crespin sports natty little shoes and black stockings, and, too indirect and ironic to be guilty of Obraztsova's shameless fondling of a boot, contents herself with administering a sly kick to Zuniga as she sashays past.

Television

Julian Barnes

Look Up Life

'Some people say that life is the thing; but I prefer reading.' Logan Pearsall Smith's wry dictum would have appealed to Trevor, the timid, awkward, slung-jawed hero of *Me! I'm Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (LWT); at the same time, it wouldn't have relieved the guilt and shiftiness about living of this down-market Alan-Bennett lookalike. A central image in Bennett's play was of two posters Trevor intended to use in his evening class on Bloomsbury at Halifax Poly. His portrait of E. M. Forster had been defaced by the addition of a Clint Eastwood cigar, and that of Virginia Woolf by pumpkin breasts – indications, respectively, of the machismo and sexuality which an anonymous graphic critic held them to lack.

Trevor's own existence might have been called a debate between the attractions of life and literature, if only debate weren't too vigorous a word to describe the damp, depressed and horribly authentic affair his existence was shown to be. A drippy girl in Trevor's class, given unconvincingly to reading out from the dictionary definitions of hard words, looks up Life; Trevor interrupts her; but, she protests, 'It goes on'; he replies wanly, 'You bet.' Trevor knows he ought to prefer life, but finds it full of elephant traps, social, familial, sexual. Life, after all, means his mother (grandly ogred by Thora Hird); either that, or his girl-friend Wendy, all Afghan blankets and brimming ski-pants, who drops her hideously frizzed hair in the muesli, and expects him to undress – in the light – to a background of sitar music. If this is life, then maybe his pupil Mr Dodds (Hugh Lloyd, in a fine cameo of jaundice) has a point: novels are preferable to daughters – 'Novels don't hang around the bus station all night'.

Bennett's play was full of good stretches of carefully presented unease, though it often seemed more an excursion into Bennettland than a developing drama. Thus, the use of Bennett's voice-over commentary often jarringly distanced the characters and their obsessions from us at points when they seemed to be getting close. But then perhaps, in view of the author's self-portrait in the opening titles, and the fact that *MIAOVW* was the 'most autobiographical' of his six plays, Bennettland was where we were meant to be. If so, you couldn't help marking the ending where, while Trevor doesn't exactly opt for life, life – in the form of his gold-earringed pupil Skinner – opts caressingly for him; the soundtrack suddenly gave us 'I'm in love with a wonderful guy' from *South Pacific* (including the line 'I'm as trite and as gay as a daisy'). It was too sweet and pat to convince dramatically (and was apparently the third ending tried); but when, you could argue, does life ever convince dramatically?

Hemingway's life, for instance, sounds pretty unconvincing: the macho swagger, the talk about the size of his cojones, the silly belief that man proves himself by catching fish, the line about grace under pressure. Anthony Burgess rightly began his film portrait on *The South Bank Show* (LWT) by reminding us how much of his life Hemingway in fact spent sitting on his butt: wrestling with words to the point of giving himself piles – Ernie Haemmorrhoid, he nicknamed himself. This colonic view of the writer is one which Burgess understands: anyone looking for an easy excuse for not writing a book should cite his admonitory introduction to *Urgent Copy* and plead a weak constitution:

> Book-writing is hard on the brain and excruciating to the body: it engenders tobacco-addiction, an over-reliance on caffeine and dexedrine, piles, dyspepsia, chronic anxiety, sexual impotence. Behind the new bad book one is asked to review lie untold misery and a very little hope. One's heart, stomach and anal tract go out to the doomed aspirant.

Strangely, apart from the passing claim that Hemingway originated the 20th-century novel, there was little in Burgess's film about the writing bit; he spent most of his time in absorbed pursuit of the writer as possibly flawed man (without actually interrogating anyone who knew him). It made a completely watchable programme, and used some excellent newsreel footage; but the result was all a bit Hem-kissing. At the end, Burgess found a handy phrase, talking of 'the abiding truth that the artist is always smaller than his art'; in which case, one wondered; shouldn't the art be given more of a look-in?

The treatment Hemingway always gets makes one grateful that Shakespeare's life is so lightly documented; otherwise, we might have had a colourful drama-doc about Wild Bill's life as a soldier of fortune in Italy in place of BBC-2's *Romeo and Juliet*, the first play in its six-year production of the whole canon. It will doubtless bring in the foreign long green, even if it does have the air of being attempted because it is there to be attempted. Still, it offers a fair chunk of the text: John Gielgud's Chorus – for no obvious reason dressed as Bellini's yellow-satin doge – promised 'the two hours traffic of our stage'; the reality proved a worthy three-hour bottleneck. Rebecca Saire carried off the pertness of Juliet well, even if she did look worryingly like Tracy Austin; Patrick Ryecart bustlingly conveyed Romeo's impulsive Petrarchery; and Michael Hordern was incomparable as Sir Alfred Ayer playing Capulet. The supposed humour and bawdry of the play was, as usual, tiresome and deficient; Mercutio couldn't have died soon enough.

In Performance's visit to the French music-hall (BBC-2) was suavely compered by Charles Aznavour, though the choice of the pocket Armenian indicated the slant of the show. Aznavour comes from the Bécaud-Distel end of the spectrum of French chanson, the end which values prolificness and international success, which is happy singing in English, which believes in the jolly international community of song, and which at the same time doesn't mind hitching a ride from the more rigorous, local and genuinely poetical tradition. The show began with some justified nostalgia: Charles Trenet giving his voice an easy time and contriving, despite his age, to look like Arthur Scargill's brother; Josephine Baker, with tricolor bunches of feathers sprouting from her head and bum, reminding

Russell Davies will be back next week.

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one of the hen in the opening graphics of *Monty Python*; a brief clip of the powerful Piaf (who, years ago, paid for Aznavour's nose-job).

When it came to the modern section, though, the show was raucous with absences. Gilbert Bécaud, he of the husky voice, is now left with only the husk; Mireille Mathieu sang 'Silence is the storm before the sun, the last cry of love, a train which departs' (and you can't get much noisier than that); while, most incongruously of all, Mme Johnny Hallyday herself, Sylvie Vartan, presented 'a type of American show'. Here was the Vegasisation of the chanson: lots of flesh showing, tumbling blonde locks to rival Parton's, dry ice, fancy lighting and fatuous libretti: 'Your bed had become a quicksand spinning round the room', she sang quite unironically. One shuddered for the absentees and the true heritage: Brel, Brassens, Ferré, Péart, Ferrat, Vian, Montand, Reggiani, Moustaki.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Compromising

Strife *Olivier*
Has 'Washington' Legs? *Cottesloe*
The Tempest *Young Vic*

Why, I wonder, did the National Theatre *Strife* not generate quite the dramatic fizz some of us had predicted? After all, Galsworthy's photo-study of what the play presciently calls 'the trouble of the century' is topical enough, both in essentials and detail. Intransigent management confronts unyielding labour across a class divide as deep as years of exploitation and deprivation can make it. The chairman warns the bard that the slightest concession will mean that ever after 'you will fly like curs before the whips of your own men'. His fellow-directors worry about plummeting stocks and rebellious shareholders. The strike leader talks of a global war against capital, 'that white-faced monster with the bloody lips that has sucked the life out of us since the world began'. The union, less visionary and perhaps more craven, withdraws its support, and the women nag the men to capitulate. And in the end the forces of compromise on each side settle the quarrel on what we're wryly told are the selfsame terms proposed at the very start.

So what went wrong? Some have pointed to Galsworthy's celebrated moderation and balance, that cricketer's code according to which each wrangling faction must be shown to be partly right, partly wrong. To the modern socialist this will obviously be irritating, because it means that the men's leader, whose outrage sounds far less astonishing nowadays than in 1909, is slyly excoriated as an impractical fanatic with a personal rather than a public grievance. He is, it is suggested, bitter because he got only £800 for an invention that made the company £100,000. But as Shakespeare surely proved in *Richard II*, and perhaps even Euripides in *The Bacchae*, an on-the-one-hand-on-the-other, middle-roading attitude isn't in itself destructive to drama. In any case, though Galsworthy's Fabian mind is with compromise and moderation, his heart is with his extremists, fiery Roberts and the solid-rock reactionary, Anthony. Their battle can and should galvanise the play's thermometer.

Perhaps the trouble is Christopher Morahan's tidy production, which begins and ends with an arrestingly purgatorial vision of furnacemen at work, but proves less than electric when Galsworthy is displaying his documentary skills in the boardroom and at the strike-meeting. Perhaps it is the actors: not the supporting cast, which boasts Sara Kestelman as a bewildered do-gooder, Nicholas Selby as a roly-poly gourmand and Donald Gee as a dry, canny mediator, but the two big guns. Perhaps Michael Bryant should pack just a bit more powder down the barrel of Roberts's purportedly charismatic personality, and perhaps Andrew Cruickshank's Anthony, who certainly looks as if he's just stepped out of *Leviticus* or *Numbers* in search of a wandering tribe to lead, shouldn't show the effects of age and exhaustion quite so soon and strongly. Or perhaps the airy Olivier isn't the auditorium for intensity. But is any of these theories enough to explain why a play that grips like a cramp in the study should soften its hold in the theatre? The mystery remains.

Charles Wood's *Has 'Washington' Legs?* is the final instalment in a trilogy whose first part was *Veterans* and second the still unseen *Script*. The subject, once again, is the film industry, in this case represented by the promoters and creators of a gaudy, moronic epic commemorating American independence. The first half, in which an ulcerous producer (Bob Hoskins) inarticulately orchestrates the ideas of a money-obsessed script-writer (Robert Stephens) and other assorted egos, is good if thinnish Wood; a resilient ply, so to speak, characterised by entertaining observation and raunchy idiom. But the second, on location in Eire and dominated by a blearily patriarchal director (Albert Finney), is hardly more than plastic Wood, a transparent attempt to fill a hole in the evening. It might be claimed that it provides yet another illustration of what is, I suppose, its author's principal theme to date, the gap between romantic pretension and crude fact; but no such impression is left in practice by the burlesque-Shakespearian rows between crew and Finney, by Finney's fake-hilarious forays into the audience, and by the botched-up stage battles that end with Finney's mock-heroic death. On the contrary, it all seems overblown and silly, a search for laughter at the cost of credibility, taste and judgment.

Michael Bogadanov finishes the Shakespeare season he quaintly calls Action Man with a modern-dress *Tempest* that reduces Ariel to a bionic cover-point, all white flannel and glazed movement, and implies that Gonzalo's promise to admit 'no kind of traffic' in his utopia means he's planning to turn Prospero's island into a vast pedestrian precinct. More provocatively, it suggests that the whole play is a power-fantasy simmering inside the imagination of Prospero himself (Bill Wallis), a deposed princeling who slouches at a cafe table throughout, brooding on old wrongs. At the end Alonso, so far from assenting to his counter-coup, musters 'I long to hear the story of your life' in the sarcastic style most people reserve for interminable bores, and fades into the shadows, leaving Prospero without even a chimaera to comfort him in his continuing exile. The best one can say for this reading is that it reminds us that the play involves politics as well as relationships; the worst, that it distorts even this aspect, and makes little of what's really important, namely sin, forgiveness, reconciliation and, in Ferdinand and Miranda, fresh hope for the future. Those who see *The Tempest* as the serene swansong of the retiring bard won't be too pleased. Those whose scholarly researches have convinced them that it is a paranoid episode free-associated by some latter-day Farouk from the pavements of Cannes – well, they'll be delighted.

Films

John Coleman

Punchlines

Interiors (AA) *The Gate, Notting Hill; Cinecenta*
Newsfront (A) *Screen on the Hill*

Already more than halfway there with *Annie Hall*, Woody Allen has gone almost wholly serious with *Interiors*. At worst, he has done so to the point of lugubrious solemnity: at best, which is much of the time, he has produced a small, flawed American tragedy, taking – as it were – the inverted commas out and away from those achingly funny wisecracks of his and leaving, with great purity, the ache. 'It's been such a long time that I've made love to a woman I didn't feel inferior to,' says a drunken, pawing fellow: and, my God, it comes over like a direct kick in the psyche, another sort of punch line. Allen's story concentrates on three sisters – but invocations of Chekhov are surely irrelevant. The name that

C DAY LEWIS FELLOWSHIP FOR WRITERS

The Greater London Arts Association and the London Borough of Brent Education Authority wish to appoint a writer to this Fellowship at South Kilburn High School, Brent for the Spring and Summer term 1979, commencing as soon as possible.

The writer will be expected to work at the school for 2 days a week over this period, encouraging and stimulating the children's own writing and interest in literature, and will receive an award of £1,850.

Any published creative writer is eligible to apply, and letters of application should be sent to:

The Literature Officer, Greater London Arts Association, 25/31 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SF
to arrive not later than 2 January 1979. Further details available on request.

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comes to mind, rather, is that of Eugene O'Neill, the O'Neill of *Long Day's Journey into Night*, which is why one is instinctively disposed to find the tragic elements of the tale 'American'. Once again, it is that unhappy hunting ground for transatlantic dramatists, the Family, that is agonisingly explored. Bergman, of course, very recently gave us *The Autumn Sonata* (on view at the London Film Festival and soon, one hopes, elsewhere) and, by one of those meaningless quirks of fate, there is mother-daughter reproach on the grand scale in both that and *Interiors*. To have done with possible derivations, I had better add now that not merely a Bergman angst informs the Allen but also the manner of Bergman visual approach (use of close-ups, scenes played into camera and against bare walls, an overall sparseness) that so often expresses it.

But it is still, after all, Woody Allen's movie, *his* hurt and special creation. Arthur (E. G. Marshall), a rich man in his early sixties, leaves his elegant wife Eve (Geraldine Page) for 'a trial separation'. She cracks up and her daughters are left to care for her. Beautiful Flyn (Kristin Griffith) is a largely absentee TV actress; Renata (Diane Keaton), a successful poet with an unsuccessful novelist as husband, has her own problems; it is boyish Joey (Marybeth Hurt), of the rimless spectacles and shifting jobs, who bears the brunt. The irony here, implicit throughout but made thunderously explicit in a long, nocturnal monologue of Joey's, addressed to her mother who may or may not be present outside the beach house that has just witnessed Arthur's re-marriage, is that she feels herself the least favourite of Eve's daughters: 'I've cared for you so and yet you have nothing but disdain for me . . . You're too perfect to live in this world.' And, indeed, Eve has been shown as fastidious to a fault, an interior decorator of exquisite nullity ('my beiges and my earth colours'), creator of a home 'like an ice-palace'; and her death rounds off the chilly event. The very end has the film's artiest composition, with the three daughters moving into a diagonal line, facing out on a now peaceful sea.

Nothing is simple, though, or as simplistically after effect as that unfortunate closing image might suggest. The men don't matter much (there is also nice Michael, played by Sam Waterston, as Joey's bloke, a radical film maker, I think). Renata's Frederick (Richard Jordan) is there to make that brutal drunk's crack at glamorous, flirty Flyn and to be the butt of some of Renata's harsher insights. And this Renata – one hesitantly proposes Allen has lent her some of the torment of Sylvia Plath – emerges as really rather a monster in Diane Keaton's extraordinary equivocal performance. There are finely crafted and staged sequences everywhere: the terrible ripping sound of black tape as Eve seals doors and windows before a suicide bid; a hopeless confrontation between Eve and Arthur in a 'Romanesque' New York church; the first meeting of the family with Arthur's new wife-to-be. The lady is called Pearl and is of great price, maybe the whole game's trump card. Maureen Stapleton magnificently pulls out all the stops as this vulgarian, with two previous husbands, and there are moments when her sheer force for life, whether by amusing the men with card tricks or literally breathing life back into a near-drowned Joey or just being forthright during an artistic chat over her head, puts a boot through the worst pretensions of the others. She is not there for nothing. It is my perhaps unworthy suspicion that Mr Allen had some doubts himself about the direction his 'serious' work was sometimes taking and that Pearl is around as a saver. In the margin, the NFT is currently running a season, 'Woody Allen's Cinema'. I cannot resist this quote from the brochure: 'Allen may be the closest American cinema has got – formally at least – to Godard.' Oh, come *on*.

Phillip Noyce's *Newsfront* has rightly been acclaimed here, there and everywhere: it is consistently entertaining and something of a freak. Basically, it follows the fortunes of an Australian newsreel cameraman, Len Maguire (Bill Hunter, a refreshingly unactorish-looking leading man), working out of Sydney between 1948 and 1956. His company is in competition with an American-owned one. Quite a bit of genuine documentary footage of the period is skilfully incorporated and there are some frankly amazing reconstructions, notably of the Maitland floods. This disaster episode opens amusingly, with Len's British sidekick, Chris (Chris Hayward), on the spot and getting a phone call from 'my worship the mayor' to row some drugs to the town hall. Once arrived, Chris looks cheerfully around: 'Don't see many places with indoor pools, do you?' Not long after, he's dead. The emotional and historical compass of *Newsfront*, which moves in and out of colour and uses wipe dissolves and suchlike with finesse, is impossible to convey briefly, so much does it swiftly pack in.

The fictional part (by which I intend the lives, working and amorous, of Len and Chris) is in itself fascinating. Len has a brother on the make, Frank, who finally proposes a crooked deal over some '56 Olympics material of Hungarian and Russian water polo players brawling: Len turns it down. 'He's just a bit old-fashioned, that's all,' says the staggeringly attractive Amy (Wendy Hughes), who has been several people's girl friend in the glancingly assembled story. And this final line turns back on bigger concerns: the growing threat of television, Len's radical politics, Menzies's arrival to power, the religious pressures conventionally applied, the Americanisation of Australia. It is well to stay alert: a whole period is encapsulated in this unassuming and ingenious enterprise.

EDEN COURT THEATRE, INVERNESS

THEATRE DIRECTOR

The Governors of Eden Court Theatre, Inverness, invite applications from candidates of proven experience and entrepreneurial skills for the post of Theatre Director.
Eden Court is an Arts and Conference Centre which opened in April, 1976. It operates principally as a touring theatre with music, opera, ballet and drama, all featuring substantially in the annual programme. Recently a Theatre in Education and Production Company has been set up, enabling productions to tour the Highland Region and elsewhere. In addition the Theatre operates as a Regional Film Theatre.
The Governors are anxious to expand the non-Theatre use of Eden Court and in particular to promote it as a major Conference Centre.
Applicants must have had considerable experience in all aspects of the Arts and in particular both touring and producing Theatre, backed up by sound administrative ability. The successful candidate will be fully responsible to the Board of Governors for the day-to-day running of the Theatre and for forward planning.
The salary scale is £7,662 rising by three increments of £288 to £8,526 per annum (including all supplements), with placing according to experience. Assistance with relocation expenses will be available.
Further details of the duties and responsibilities of the post and the appropriate application form may be obtained from the undersigned. The closing date for applications will be 7 January 1979.

EDEN COURT THEATRE, BISHOPS ROAD, INVERNESS
R. H. Stevenson Secretary to the Board of Governors

Art

John Spurling

Seen Dead

The Gold of El Dorado *Royal Academy*
Frozen Tombs *British Museum*
Seurat *David Carritt, 15 Duke Street*
Writing Pieces by Anthony Caro *Knoedler*
John Moores Liverpool Exhibition XI *Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool*

The Gold of El Dorado is not exactly a fraud on the public, but the title is, shall we say, a bit fly. There are three separate elements involved: the Spanish expedition led by Jiménez de Quesada which in 1537 discovered and pillaged the agricultural and trading civilisation of the Muiscas; the legend of El Dorado – the Golden King who was believed to powder himself all over with gold-dust – which started in 1541 and, gathering force and embroidery over the next century, lured many luckless adventurers, including Raleigh, to sticky ends; and the artifacts of gold, tumbaga (gold and copper alloy) and pottery, dating from roughly AD 400 to 1500, which have been recovered in modern times, mostly by robbing tombs, from 11 different tribal areas (including the Muiscas') of what is now Colombia. The Royal Academy exhibition conflates the three elements, adding another couple of Spanish expeditions which reached the Muiscas while Quesada was still there – all three, of course, looking for gold but not for the still uninvented land of El Dorado – and triumphantly suggests that what the great British public is queuing for is a sight of what the latter fruitlessly fought and died for. Their next crowd-puller, which I shall be happy to organise, might be called *Captain Flint's Treasure*.

Putting El Dorado aside, however, the objects at the Academy – chiefly from the Gold Museum in Bogotá – are worth seeing. There is a room demonstrating the Indians' sophisticated methods of working gold and some of the practical uses they had for it – as depilatory tweezers, penis covers, musical instruments and lime-dippers as well as fish hooks, helmets and spear-throwers. But most of the objects, since they come from tombs, tend to be votive or ornamental and these are set in groups according to the different tribes which made them. The Sinú are notable for their staff-heads and ear-ornaments (which

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look like filigree but are actually cast); the Muiscas for their flat, votive figures like golden gingerbread men; the Calima for their elaborate, hammered and embossed body-ornaments to which are attached what the catalogue calls 'danglers', making them look like Christmas decorations; the Tolima for their geometrical, semi-abstract pectorals; and the Quimbaya, on the strength of two particularly rich hauls (now belonging to Madrid and the British Museum), for their mastery of rounded form, their finish and their expressiveness. One might judge Quimbaya to have been the Benin of the Andes, except that so much depends on the accident of what has been found more recently and acquired by a museum as opposed to what was rifled earlier and valued for its metal rather than its workmanship.

The Spaniards melted nearly everything down before exporting it, though Dürer managed to see some of Moctezuma's treasures in Europe and 'marvelled at the subtle ingenuity of the people of these distant lands'. The tribes represented in this exhibition were no doubt somewhat provincial compared to the Aztecs, the Maya or their nearer neighbours, the Incas, but the fact that gold happened to be their local metal and that their palaces and temples were made of wood has left us with a peculiarly constricted view of them. Indeed the most memorable things in the show are not made of gold at all, but of pottery – two wonderfully animated figures from the Tumaco region, an orange and red Quimbaya bowl in the shape of a fat woman lying on her back, and a display of eleven variously-sized seated men, with square heads and bird noses, a conference of ancestors, the chorus of an Eliot play.

There are a few items of borrowed gold at the British Museum, from the Siberian collection of Peter the Great. They form part of an exhibition on loan from Leningrad and devoted to the surviving possessions – preserved because the ground they were buried in never unfroze – of the nomadic tribes of southern Siberia, the dreaded Scythians. Their horses were buried near them, and the most lively things in the exhibition (the precious things having long since been robbed) are from the horses' caparisons – decorations of leather and wood. But it is a show mostly more curious than beautiful, containing such unlikely remnants of the five centuries before Christ as a leather bootee, a felt stocking, a woollen pigtail-case, a man's white shirt, a child's fur coat and the tattooed skin of a chieftain's arm.

Hard by the Academy, at the David Carritt Gallery and Knoedler's, are two kinds of alchemy. Carritt is showing a small but choice selection of drawings and paintings by Seurat, including a scintillating late version of *Les Poseuses*. Seurat's alchemy is to transform the commonplace into a fairy-tale world of jewelled colour and luminous shadow; Caro's at the Knoedler Gallery is to turn assorted bits of scrap metal – old scissors, nuts and bolts, hooks, spanners, dividers, corkscrews and fragments of rusted steel – into arabesques drawn on air. These small 'Writing Pieces', laid out on a large white trestle table in the middle of the gallery, are both humorous and exhilarating. I wouldn't mind being seen dead with any of them. They will speak well of our culture in 2,000 years.

The same cannot be said of the latest John Moores exhibition, the biennial Booker Prize of contemporary British art. With some exceptions – none of which received even a consolation prize – it is such a display of lifeless, academic abstraction as to make one wonder how the artists get through their days (unless by composing pretentious 'statements'), let alone how the judges got through their judging. The unwary visitor should be warned that this show in no way represents the best contemporary British art but is rather a dreadful monument to the petty politics of the art world.

Music

Andrew Clements

Deschooling

On Sunday, Oliver Messiaen is 70. In Britain we are so used to lavish birthday celebrations for our leading composers that it comes as a shock not to find a variety of concerts in honour of the most respected and influential French composer since Debussy. Yet the tributes that have been arranged seem a positive jamboree compared with those accorded Elliott Carter, who also reaches 70 next week, the day after Messiaen.

Were they not so exactly contemporary, it's unlikely that anyone would contemplate linking the Catholic mystic and the New York nationalist in a critical sense. A general historical survey of 20th-century music might lump them, perhaps together with Michael Tippett, under the heading of 'Mid-century Individualists', emphasising the independence of each, their lack of adherence to any school and the eclecticism of their musical idiom. In geographical terms at least, Messiaen and Carter were closest in the early Thirties, when Carter, then a fervent Francophile, went to Paris to study with Nadia Boulanger, the high priestess of Stravinskyan neoclassicism. Messiaen was then just beginning to make a mark; he was part of a group calling itself La Jeune France, young composers pledged to the restoration of the individual in French music and to the rejection of all academicism and impersonality. To such a group the School of Boulanger, with its fastidious emphasis on craftsmanship and machine-like finish, must have been anathema.

Carter, in the full knowledge of the important European artistic movements of the first quarter of the 20th century, retained his neoclassicism when he returned to the USA. The Parisian indoctrination, reinforced by the populist movement among American artists in the late Thirties, was sufficient to suppress any radical tendencies the young composer might have felt; a friendship with Charles Ives since the Twenties led him into an ambivalent attitude to Ives's music, admiring its integrity and originality, while rejecting its lack of proportioning and surface elegance. Only later did Carter manage to square his musical personality with the implications of Ives's experiments; the result was a gradual but devastating reorientation that began in the late 1940s and which turned him from a relatively minor figure in the American movement to an independent voice of great power and originality.

Coincidentally, Carter's personal transformation began at the time of Messiaen's most decisive influence on the course of European music. His classes in analysis and rhythmics at the Paris Conservatoire attracted a succession of students of astonishing ability: Boulez, Barraqué, Pousseur, Stockhausen and Xenakis — virtually the pick of the subsequent Fifties avant garde. Messiaen's choice of analysis subjects, particularly from the early Stravinsky and the Second Viennese School, encouraged the post-war generation of composers away from neoclassicism towards serialism and ultimately to total serialism, again prompted by Messiaen. In the same period, too, Messiaen produced what has remained his best known work, the trilogy based on the Tristram and Iseult legend with the gargantuan *Turangalîla* Symphony as its centre-point. Since then, in technical terms at least, his music has ceased to develop; the essence of his style, its aspirations towards the monumental and the hieratic, are all contained in his first published piece, *Le Banquet Céleste* for organ, written when he was 20. Subsequently he has progressed by accretion, adding elements to his style in strict pedagogic classification: the modes of limited transposition, Greek and Hindu rhythms and, most extensively of all, bird songs. The effect of these concoctions is essentially static; like a Bruckner symphony, Messiaen's music is less concerned with the process of becoming than with the celebration and affirmation of what *is*. Messiaen's aim is not just to be a 'religious composer' but to be a theological one; the extreme interpenetration of Catholicism and musical technique in his recent pieces, in which a cipher allows musical phrases to 'stand for' religious aphorisms, is a synthesis

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that no other composer could carry off. One may reject the dogma surrounding much of Messiaen's work while still surrendering to its richness and power.

Carter, however, is very much a composer concerned with becoming. His work of the last 30 years could well prove to be the most single-minded personal achievement since Schoenberg's development of the 12-note method; its starting point remarkably seems to have been an increased awareness of the early Expressionists, not only in music but also in literature. The turning point was apparently his re-reading of Freud and a realisation that 'the whole conception of human nature underlying the neoclassic aesthetic amounted to a sweeping under the rug of things that . . . we had to deal with in a less oblique and resigned way'. Yet since this decision Carter has appeared oblivious to subsequent developments in European art, as if unconsciously recapturing the artistic isolation of the previous generation of American radical composers in an effort to reassert his American-ness. His texts for vocal compositions have been defiantly American: Whitman (inevitably), Dickinson, Frost, Hart Crane, Allen Tate and most recently, in his first vocal works for 30 years, Elizabeth Bishop and John Ashbery. Certainly, although he has continued a European tradition of complex musical discourse that began with Beethoven, he has combined it with an intellectual lucidity that allows its structure to be simply explained at the level of harmonic and rhythmic organisation, however rebarbative the surface texture.

Carter's music remains underplayed and undervalued in Britain, if not in Europe as a whole. His most recent work, *A Symphony of Three Orchestras*, premièred nearly two years ago, has yet to be performed in London. Meanwhile, in New York this weekend, his 70th birthday is to be celebrated by the first performance of a new work, *Syringa*, settings of John Ashbery and texts from classical Greek. I shudder to think how long it will be before we get a chance to hear that.

Weekend Competition

No 2544 **Set by B. Mooring**

Why don't we bring back an old favourite in time for the New Year: invent wise-sounding but meaningless proverbs and sayings suitable for the 1979 calendars. Example: 'Tall trees grow nearer the sky.' Four tries each; by 22 December.

Result of No 2541 **Set by Spiro Keats**

We asked for clerihews on the subject of powerful beverages.

Report **by Val Policella**

This was the comp richly endowed by our munificent sponsors, the makers of Bisquit Cognac. As E.O. Parrott – no mean toper himself, I can tell you, to judge the comp parties, at which . . . oh well, Christmas and all that – put it:

Cognac
Has one knack:
It prompts
Lots of entries for comps.

Hundreds, in fact, and most of a high standard. After much thought, we decided to give bottles of Bisquit to five of you – Michie, Greenwell, Fowler, Polglaze and Parrott – and keep the rest of the case to award as special prizes for outstanding entries in forthcoming comps. Three quid also for every entry printed; commiserations to the talented but libellous Keith Aitken.

Drinking too much Montrachet
Proved the downfall of a Belgian attaché
Who was guilty of a leak
In front of the entire *corps diplomatique*.

There's not so much to choose between beer and cider.
The former makes you wider,
And the latter
Fatter. JAMES MICHIE

The Mahdi
Was not after Bacardi;
What he wanted to lay in
Was Gordon's gin. BILL GREENWELL

Ways of mixing a Bloody Mary
Vary
But the vodka (as opposed to the tomato)
Is obbligato. LAURENCE FOWLER

The pleasures of boozin'
Are different from snoozin';
Snoozin' is about naps,
And boozin' is about schnapps.
PASCOE POLGLAZE

Entre Deux Mers
Allays cross-channel cares,
And halfway to Dover
You'll be demi-mers over. E. O. PARROTT

Drink Remy Martin,
You don't start fartin';
Drink ouzo,
You do so. SARAH BLANQUETTE

Veuve du Vernay, Brut,
Sounds cute;
You can, moreover,
Splash it all over. TED THOMPSON

Schnapps
Is for hearty chaps
Who drink in saunas
And puke in dark caunas. V. F. CORLEONE

Ouzo
An alpha plus booze? au
Contraire: but retsina's
Greatly undervalued at beta minus.
JAMES R. LITTLE

Taittinger Comtes de Champagne Blanc de Blancs
Ain't plonk,
So 'oo can 'ford a Magnum
Dahn Dagnum? GERRY HAMILL

Too much schnapps
Sometimes leads to mishaps
Over which embarrassed males
Prefer to draw veils. PETER PETERSON

Was it the bottled Guinness
That made Yeats arise and go to Innis-
Free? If so I think I know why
Horsemen passed by. BARRY ANTHONY

The drinking of methylated spirits
Is not common at Cannes or at Biarritz.
There, the bibulous
Seek more refined stimulus. M. TAYLOR

To allow slivovitz
To give of its
Qualities of high repute,
Don't dilute. W. E. WEBB

Tony Miles

Chess

No 111 **September Problems**

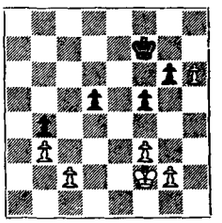
The September problems proved to be quite a demanding set. **Problem 98 (5rk1/5pp1/pr3R1p/1pbP4/3p2Q1/P2Bq3/1PP3PP/5R1K)** had a neat study-like solution: 1.P-Q6! and if the pawn is captured 2.Q-B5 followed by the appropriate sacrifice on g6. Incidentally, after 1 . . . RxP; 2.RxBP is also adequate, if somewhat less elegant: 2 . . . RxR; 3.Q-B8ch, R-Q1; 4.QxRch, B-B1 – or R-B1, Q-Q5ch – 5.Q-Q5 etc. Other defensive tries were (**a**) 1 . . . Q-N4 which falls to 2.RxBP! BxQP (or . . . R-K1; 3.R-B8ch, RxR; 4.Q-K6ch) 3.Q-K6 mating quickly, or even 2.Q-K4, P-N3; 3.P-KR4! and the black queen is trapped after either . . . Q-R4; 4.B-K2 or . . . Q-N6; 4.R(1)-B3 and (**b**) 1 . . . Q-K4; 2.RxRP! (but not 2.RxBP, BxQP) RxP (3.R-R8ch was a threat) 3.B-R7ch, K-R1; 4.R-R5 and wins. If the queen moves, 5.B-N6ch and 6.R-R8ch mates.

Problem 101 (8/6K1/6p1/7p/1p3RPP/1P2rP2/1K6/8) was unfortunately mis-set. I was interested in the analysis of 1 . . .P-N4 and forgot that 1 . . .R-K7ch; 2.K-B1, P-N4 draws comfortably: 3.R-B5, NPxP; 4.RxP (R-N5ch doesn't help) R-KB7; 5.RxP, RxP; 6.K-B2, R-B6ch; 7.K-N2, R-N6 etc. Fortunately some solvers also overlooked 1 . . . R-K7ch, so my analysis has some relevance. On 1 . . . P-N4; 2.RxP (others are clearly bad) NPxP; 3.PxP, R-K7ch! (But not P-R6; 4.R-KR4, RxP; 5.P-R6ch winning) 4.K-R3, (K-B3 is no better) R-R7; White cannot win. The game continued 5.R-N6 (hoping for . . . P-R6; 6.R-N4, K-R3; 7.R-KR4, though even then 7 . . . K-N4; 8.P-R6, KxR probably draws) R-KN7; 6.R-N4, R-R7; 7.R-QB4, K-R3; 8.P-N4, KxP; 9.P-N5 and now 8 . . . R-R8! is best (10.P-N6, R-R8ch) but not 9 . . . P-R6? 10.P-N6. In the game Black played 9 . . . R-N7!? which narrowly fails to lose.

Problem 102 (8/4k3/7P/1R6/4K2p/8/6Pp/5n2) has a beautiful solution: 1.K-K5! and now (**a**) 1 . . . P-R8=Q 2.R-N7ch, K-Q1 (or K1 or B1) 3.P-R7, Q-R7ch; 4.K-K6, K-B1; 5.R-N7 and wins. (**b**) 1 . . . K-Q2; 2.P-R7, P-R8=Q; 3.P-R8=Q, Q-R7ch; 4.K-B5, N-K6ch; (or N-N6ch, K-N6) 5.K-K4, QxPch; (otherwise the exposed black king is soon mated) 6.KxN, Q-N8ch; 7.K-Q2, Q-B7ch; 8.K-B3, Q-K6ch; 9.K-N4, Q-K5ch; 10.K-R5, Q-K8ch; 11.R-N4 wins. (**c**) 1 . . . K-B2; 2.P-R7, K-N2; (or P-R8=Q; 3.R-N7ch, K-N3; 4.P-R8=Q, Q-R7ch; 5.K-K6) 3.P-R8=Qch! KxQ; 4.K-B6, P-R8=Q (. . . K-R2; 5.R-R5ch and RxP or . . . K-N1; 5.K-N6, K-B1; 6.R-B5ch and RxN) 5.K-B7! N-N6 (forced); 6.K-N6! and there is no defence to R-N8 mate.

First prize in the September competition is shared by Messrs Sahasrabudhe and Taylor (£11 each) with consolation prizes to Messrs Allen, Cornforth, Deshmukh, Garfath, Kwiatkowski, Sobey and Thorat (£4 each).

Problem No 111
Black to play, continued 1 . . . P-B5. Comment, and how should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 19 December.



Solution to Problem 109
Yes 1 . . . R-R1ch! 2.K-N5, P-N6! 3.P-N7, R-KB1! 4.R-QB2, R-B7! 5.R-B4 (if P-N8=Q, RxR; 6.Q-QR8, R-KB7 and K-N8-R7 draws) R-B1; 6.R-B8, R-B7; 7.P-N8=Q, R-N7ch; 8. K-B4, RxQ; 9. RxR, KxP; 10.K-Q3, K-B7; 11. R.-B8ch, K-K8 Draw.

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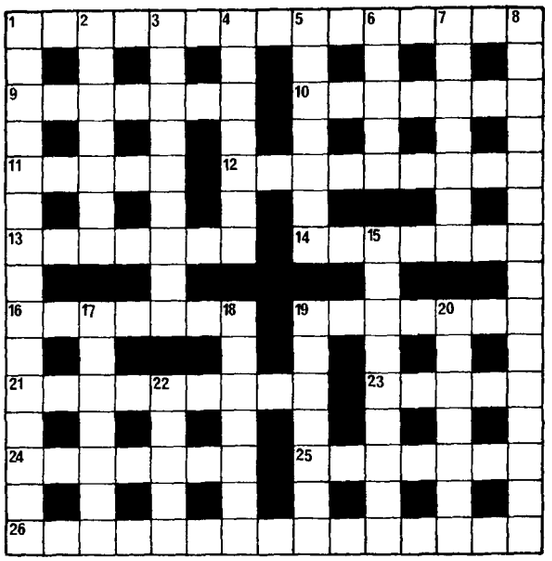

ACROSS

1 Chinks alarmed me, showing signs of Communism (6,3,6)
9 Seen at Wimbledon, the rest are in the north of France (7)
10 Return an article about not being a composer (7)
11 Disturbed loner is made to join organisation (5)
12 Prophet caught by fool and artist (9)
13 Destination of writing or speech (7)
14 Old age goes nimbly back for a pin (7)
16 Appointed and set in action (7)
19 Dissolute as flyer and swimmer? (7)
21 Free cash I drop in ecstasy (9)
23 Literary river with a high mark (5)
24 Birds make animals follow one in a race (7)
25 A serious indisposition for a maid (7)
26 Elusive creature which may appear cross, then solemn (4,4,7)

DOWN

1 Let England share broadcast opera (6,3,6)
2 Grew up with you as a foreigner in a strange dream (7)
3 One girl in ten distributed a medical application (9)
4 Policeman enters legislation for drug-takers (7)
5 Provide me with sides and ends (7)
6 Ancient place in a nation I admire (5)
7 A girl acted as an insect (7)
8 They blaze love trail roughly for a star (9,6)
15 Apartment ten in the hotel brings one a rise in the cost of living (9)
17 Copper includes the final one in this material (7)
18 Shirkers become workers only when the chief is absent (7)
19 Restore through a miracle in conversion (7)
20 Insert to help him plan the route (7)
22 No means of imperial government reversed by the descendant (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to Salamanca 12

B	O	R	E	C	O	L	E	S	M	I	T			
O	R	O	T	L	C	A	P	T	O	R	W			
S	A	V	O	Y	A	R	H	O	N	C	E			
B	J	E	U	P	E	K	E	K	A	L	E			
O	A	K	S	E	S	O	B	E	R	E	D			
K	O	H	L	R	A	B	I	O	C	M	S			
M	A	E	E	T	R	E	A	C	H	E	R			
E	S	C	R	O	L	L	U	H	O	S	E			
T	A	T	U	L	A	I	K	O	O	H	G			
O	R	A	L	T	R	E	A	N	T	A	E			
P	G	R	E	E	N	S	S	E	T	H	N			
E	V	E	R	C	O	L	E	W	O	R	T			

Notes: Unclued acrosses are Cabbages, downs are Kings, as anagrammed in title of puzzle – the subject link suggested by Carroll's Walrus & Carpenter verse.

Prizewinners to Salamanca 12

Stephen Ainley (Hilmarton)
R. O. Davies (Leicester)
Kaye Barnes (Faringdon)

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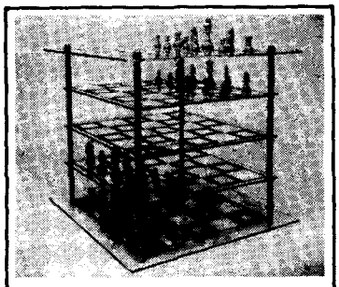

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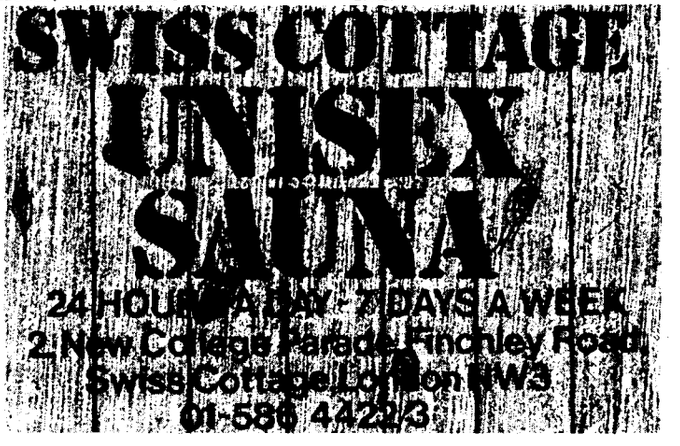

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NEW STATESMAN

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8 December 1978
Great Turnstile, London WC1
Tel: 01-405 8471

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